Discoveries in Western Tibet and the Western Himalayas

ESSAYS ON HISTORY, LITERATURE, ARCHAEOLOGY AND ART



EDITED BY

AMY HELLER AND
GIACOMELLA OROFINO

BRILL PROCEEDINGS OF THE TENTH SEMINAR OF THE IATS, 2003

Discoveries in Western Tibet and the Western Himalayas

Brill's Tibetan Studies Library

Edited by

Henk Blezer
Alex McKay
Charles Ramble

VOLUME 10/8

Discoveries in Western Tibet and the Western Himalayas

Essays on History, Literature, Archaeology and Art

PIATS 2003: Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the Tenth Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Oxford, 2003.
Managing Editor: Charles Ramble.

Edited by

Amy Heller and Giacomella Orofino

BRILL

LEIDEN · BOSTON
2007

Cover illustration: Guge Kingdom. Photo by Francesca Sfondrini, 2006.

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

ISSN: 1568-6183
ISBN: 978 90 04 15520 6

PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

The present volume is the result of a panel at the International Association for Tibetan Studies Oxford seminar, September 2003.

The raison d'être of this panel was to encourage an interdisciplinary approach to the study of Mnga' ris skor gsum and adjacent regions.

Although they were integrated into the zone of the Tibetan empire since the seventh century, the geography of these regions led over time to distinct patterns of trade and cross-influences with the polities of central Asia, Nepal and India.

By their diversity, the participant's research covers a very broad time range from the Zhang zhung period to the 20th century, in order to offer as complete an outline as possible of the state of research in this area and to illustrate the rich terrain of information which it provides. In addition to specific topics linked to the political history of the kingdoms of Gu ge and Pu hrang, the contributions focussed on religious and secular art, architecture, and literature produced in or for western Tibet and the western Himalayas.

This particular field of studies has begun to attract ever increasing interest on the part of scholars, mainly since it has proved to be of seminal importance for the definition of the historical and cultural processes of the entire Indo-Tibetan civilisation, especially after the recent archaeological discoveries which have produced highly significant scientific results.

The panel was scheduled on the last morning of the Oxford seminar, which precluded a general discussion of all participants as several were obliged to depart before the conclusion of the entire session. In addition, two panellists were obliged to publish separately within the context of their university: Renate Ponweiser, University of Vienna, who presented a paper on narrative composition in the ambulatory of the cella in the *'du khang* of Ta bo, and Zhang Changhong, Sichuan University Institute for Tibetan Studies, who presented her findings on typology of stūpa in the vicinity of Tho gling and Dung dkar. Geshe Wangyal, a Bonpo lama from Dolpo district, northwest Nepal, unfortunately died a few weeks before the Oxford Seminar. His presence was sorely missed. The abstract of his paper is included in the present vol-

ume as a testimony to his achievement and as a salient reminder of the scholars of western Himalaya, who increasingly are analysing their history, religions, and societies. Enrico dell' Angelo, director of the Khor chags restoration project, had proposed a study of the history of Khor chags monastery, but was unable to attend. Giacomella Orofino, who participated in the same restoration project with dell'Angelo, presented the results of the ASIA restoration project and her research on a specific text recovered in Khor chags (see below). Huo Wei, director of the Sichuan University Institute for Tibetan Studies, was prevented from attending the Oxford seminar due to unforeseen visa problems, and his paper has been included in the present volume. His student Zhang Changhong represented their institute at the Oxford seminar.

In terms of content, the volume begins with archaeology, secular and religious. Aldenderfer and Huo Wei present here the first archeological reports in the history of the International Association for Tibetan Studies. Aldenderfer has done in-situ excavations at Dindun, a site located on a high terrace overlooking the river between the modern villages of Phyi yang and Dung dkar in Mnga' ris. Testing in 1999 and more extensive excavation in 2001 revealed the presence of residential architecture dating to approximately 85 BC. This excavation revealed several residences and differentiated living environments. Huo Wei, after initial archeological investigations of Tibetan tombs in central Tibet and the Lha rtse district, has recently concentrated his efforts on excavations and site-reports of Tibetan caves and mchod rten in the vicinity of Dung dkar, in Mnga' ris. He discusses here the recently rediscovered wall paintings of the caves of Byang rtse Mkhar phug, north of Dung dkar, which may be dated to the flourishing of Buddhism in Mnga' ris during the bstan pa phyi dar due to the content of the mural paintings and maṇḍala of the liturgical cycles of Vairocana.

The volume proceeds with two articles on architecture. Kozicz investigated with Prof. Heusgen of Graz and measured several sites, including Nyar ma in Ladakh, whose foundation is attributed to Rin chen bzang po, according to his biography written shortly after his death in 1055. As the results of their measurements illustrate some basic aspects of the architectural practices, Kozicz has studied the architecture of this former monastic enclave, working towards a comparison with A lci (Ladakh) and Ta bo (Spiti) and the analysis of the criteria for the architectural design of Nyar ma. Di Mattia does not

study the entire architecture of monastic buildings, but instead concentrates on the development and differentiated usage of architectural frames in the facades and interior decoration of monasteries in western Himalaya and Tibet.

The analysis of religious literature, in the context of the historical development of these regions, is the focus of the studies of Orofino, Heller and De Rossi Filibeck.

Orofino presents here the background of the Khor chags restoration project with the finding of a collection of manuscript texts, hidden in three walled hollow rooms in the *'du khang*. One of the buried manuscripts, the well known canonical text, *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgiti* has proved to be, on the base of critical textual analysis, very near to the Rin chen bzang po's translation archetype, tracing back, with great probability, to the first phases of the foundation of the Khor chags settlement, before the 12th century. The critical analysis of the text proves, once again, the importance of the western Tibet literary collections in the study of the formation of the Tibetan canons.

Heller and De Rossi Filibeck both analyse the prefaces of manuscript copies of volumes of the Tibetan Buddhist canon. In the context of a restoration project in a village of Dolpo, Nepal, Heller discusses here the history of Gnas sar dgon pa and analyses the prefaces of several manuscripts from a corpus of more than 600 volumes conserved in this Dolpo temple. These prefaces range from mid-14th to late 15th century, corresponding respectively to periods of Khas Malla and Glo bo patronage of Buddhism in Dolpo. The Gnas gsar prefaces show literary and organisational similarities with those analysed by De Rossi Filibeck in her previous studies of several prefaces of 17th century manuscripts, collected by Giuseppe Tucci in his travels near Ta bo and Tho gling and now preserved in the IsIAO library. Here De Rossi Filibeck presents a new study on the contents and the formal aspects of this very interesting literary material.

The history of the monastery is the topic of Lo Bue who here presents his study of Guru lha khang in Ladakh. Lo Bue reviews previous analysis of the chronology and content of this monastery's mural paintings as a prelude to a new analyis and definitive dating for Guru lha khang to the 15th century. Geshe Wangyal's abstract on Bsam gling, the principal Bonpo monastery in Dolpo, is a useful summary of the history of this monastic foundation. The history of a Bonpo pilgrimage in Dolpo and the synchronic development of its sacred geography is pre-

sented in the research by Kind. Jahoda also studies the history of a monastery, however his study of the Ta bo monastery is specific to the economic history of Ta bo village and monastery brought to light by documents pertaining to the economic relationships between the monastery and the lay population of Ta bo and other villages in Spiti valley during the third quarter of the 20th century, and examined through the 19th century antecedents of these relations.

Spanning secular, religious and economic history, literature, art and archaeology from pre-historical period to the 20th century, the articles presented here show the importance of research on west Tibet and western Himalaya and demonstrate the fruitful exchange of interdisciplinary research within this geographical context. The editors wish to thank all of the contributors for their patience and cooperative attitude. We are grateful to Dr Charles Ramble, as convenor of the conference, for his hospitality, congeniality and encouragement of this publication, and Mr Anthony Aris, of the Aris Trust, which facilitated the organisation of the Oxford IATS seminar and publication of this volume. To honour the memory of our dear friend and colleague Dr Michael Aris, historian of Tibet and of the Himalayas, this volume is humbly dedicated.

Amy Heller and Giacomella Orofino

Part One: Archaeology and Art

DEFINING ZHANG ZHUNG ETHNICITY: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE FROM FAR WESTERN TIBET

MARK ALDENDERFER
UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

The Zhang zhung polity once thrived in the high deserts of western Tibet from roughly 500 BCE until 625 CE. The origins and evolution of the polity are shrouded in mystery. Legends and fragmentary history speak of migrations of peoples from the west into the homeland of Zhang zhung, but when these occurred is unknown. The nature of the polity is debated: it has been variously described as a small-scale coalition of territorially-based linages, a kingdom (Petech 1997: 230), a confederation (Beckwith 1987: 14), a petty state (Tucci 1956: 92), and an empire. Even the location of Zhang zhung has been disputed, with some authors arguing for a vast, nebulous polity that extended from western Tibet well into northeastern Tibet and beyond (Tucci 1956; Chang 1960). But aside from the myth, legend and apparent mystery, Zhang zhung played a major role in central Asian prehistory and history. It appears to have acted as an important intermediary of trade and the diffusion of knowledge between the Indian subcontinent and the Tibetan plateau, and for a time, was a significant political rival of the emerging Tibetan empire. It also acted as a filter of knowledge and cultural influences from the distant west, including Sogdiana, Persia, and the Hellenistic world (Stein 1972). Perhaps of even greater importance was the sponsorship by Zhang zhung of Bon, a belief system thought by many to be the indigenous religion of much of the Tibetan plateau, and which had a profound influence of the development and evolution of Tibetan Buddhism (Kvaerne 1995). However, without a more secure empirical basis upon which to describe Zhang zhung, it will continue to be more myth than history, and its role in regional history and its influence on subsequent Tibetan cultural development will remain in the realm of speculation.

One potential domain of great significance for the study of Zhang zhung has been sadly neglected—archaeology. This neglect, however,

is entirely understandable. Systematic archaeological research on the Tibetan plateau did not begin until the later part of the 20th century, and it was only during the 1990s that Chinese and foreign scholars turned their attention to the so-called 'pre-Buddhist' archaeological remains from western Tibet. Foremost among these scholars has been John Vincent Bellezza (2001, 2002), who has conducted a series of reconnaissance-level surveys of upper Tibet and the Byang thang, recording almost 500 archaeological sites, many of which he argues to be of Zhang zhung cultural affiliation. While there is no question that many, if not most of these sites, are 'pre-Buddhist', whether they are 'Zhang zhung' or pertain to some other cultural formation remains to be determined. The lack of a detailed chronology for the region creates this problem. Bellezza was unable to excavate or collect at these sites, and therefore has placed them into time through consideration of architectural style and general content, location, and stories, myths and legends collected from local inhabitants, and information gleaned from a thorough reading of what historical documents exist for the region. Until a sound regional chronology is constructed and comparisons of cultural content made within it, his scheme must be used with considerable caution.

To move our understanding of Zhang zhung forward, in this paper I report upon the first systematic attempt to use archaeological data to fashion a preliminary definition of Zhang zhung 'ethnicity'. Ethnicity, of course, is a difficult concept, especially when approached from an archaeological perspective, since it is a social phenomenon defined by living people, and can be both ascribed by outsiders as well as generated within some group. As such, it is highly fluid, situational, and subject to great variability. Barth (1970: 14), in his classic treatment of ethnicity, suggests that its material representations may be bound up in so-called overt signs, such as dress and house form, among other things, as well as in language, customs, and basic value orientations. Archaeologists must infer ethnicity through a careful examination of material culture and its variation within a tightly controlled chronological framework and the different contexts in which it is found. In the past, ethnicity was seen by archaeologists as relatively fixed, almost primordial. This led to the creation of highly detailed trait lists of material culture across as many classes of material culture as could be found, and these were used to create boundaries of 'tribes' or other ethnic formations. This rigid conception has been replaced by the careful

examination of specific artifact classes, especially domestic architecture, mortuary patterns, and iconographic representations on ceramics, mobilary, and parietal art. How to think about artifact style has been reexamined as well, and at least two variants of it, emblemic and isochrestic styles are now known to be useful in exploring ancient ethnicity (Wiessner 1983: 257; Shennan 1989: 17–22; Sackett 1990; Emberling 1997). Emblemic style is seen as a deliberate attempt by members of an ethnic group or other self-recognised social formation to decorate objects of all kinds in ways that clearly demarcate themselves from others. Isochrestic style is usually seen as 'unconscious' variation in artifact treatment that originates from habitual, day-to-day practice. The difference between these categories is subtle, and the recognition of either is fully contingent upon large, comparable samples of materials from a diversity of settings.

The archeological data I shall use to develop this preliminary definition of Zhang zhung ethnicity comes from excavations at four archaeological sites in far western Tibet: Dindun, a village site (Aldenderfer 2003; Aldenderfer and Moyes 2004), and three cemeteries near Dindun (Chinese Institute of Tibetology, Sichuan University 2001a, 2001b). This research is part of a larger project concerned with the famous Buddhist-era sites of Piyang and Dung dkar (Aldenderfer 2001; Huo 2002a, 2002b; Huo and Li 2001). Following descriptions of the residential architecture, mortuary patterns, and selected artifacts, I will then compare these data to archaeological evidence from the trans-Himalaya, the Byang thang, and central Tibet demonstrate similarities and differences between these areas.

Chronology

A total of three radiocarbon dates have been recovered from the village and mortuary contexts. The most probable dates of the samples places them into a time frame that ranges from roughly 500–100 BCE.[1] The dates from the village and mortuary contexts overlap at two standard

[1] Dates have been calibrated and combined using the OxCal 3.8 R_Combine function to create this age range (Bronk Ramsey 2002).

deviations, although it can be argued that the mortuary sites are slightly earlier than the village. However, the significant similarity of the ceramic assemblages among the sites suggests that they are indeed archaeologically contemporaneous.

Residential Architecture

Dindun, at an elevation of ca. 4100 m, is located mid-way between the two major sites of Piyang and Dung dkar on the south side of the Nag chu on a high terrace which lies some 30 m above the river channel. The site is bounded on two sides by deep gorges, a shallower gorge to the south, and fronts the river to the north. Although the surface of this terrace is generally even, it does slope sharply upward to the south. The most notable cultural features found on the terrace are Buddhist-era constructions, including *mchod rten*, walls, and other structural remains, two large areas of jumbled rock, one at the north end of the terrace and another to the south, and a large cleared area that lies between the rocky areas. The rocky areas have within them depressions of varying sizes that have been partially cleared of rock and in at least one instance, one of these depressions had been excavated in the distant past. No similar depressions can be seen in the central cleared area, although alignments of rock, presumably delineating structures, are present. None of these alignments in this area were complete in that they did not obviously close and bound a structure. The stones used to construct the Buddhist-era features are likely to have been taken from these areas.

Careful examination of the depressions as well as inspection of stone alignments on the surface of the terrace revealed that, aside from the Buddhist-era constructions, there were a number of smaller structures present on the terrace. Four of these structures were excavated, and based on their form and contents, were judged to be residential in function. The architectural canon embodied by the four structures is roughly similar—rectangular structures with interior divisions that generally, but not always, create interior rooms, hearth and kitchen areas always found in the southwestern corner of the structure, single-storeyed or semi-subterranean, and the use of carefully-laid wall foundations of similar construction and treatment (Figures 1a, 1b). The structures are

free-standing, and do not share walls, nor do they directly abut on other structures. Insofar as it can be determined, the residential structures do not conform to a larger spatial plan.

Mortuary Patterns

The tombs in the mortuary component can be placed into two categories: those that use stone as construction material, and those that do not (Figures 2a, 2b; Chinese Institute of Tibetology *et al.* 2001a, 2001b). Within the former category, tombs are either square to rectangular or circular in form. Within the latter, tombs may be square to rectangular, circular to ovoid, or in one instance, a shaft tomb. However, no matter what the construction medium, the tombs are excavated into the ground surface at depths ranging from 10 to 50 cm. Square and circular stone tombs use rock to line their walls, and in a few instances, use them as floors. Most tombs have single chambers, although there are a few examples of double-chambered stone tombs. Tombs range in size from ca. 2–3 m in maximum dimension or diameter. There is no tendency for any side of a tomb to be oriented with a cardinal direction. Almost all of the stone tombs have been disturbed over the centuries, either by looters seeking their contents or by those wishing to use their stone for other constructions. Thus, none of those tested had cultural materials or human remains present within them. Likewise, it is difficult to determine what their final original forms had been and how they had been roofed or covered over. Tombs without stone are roughly the same size. Although the majority of these tombs have human remains and cultural material present, some appear to have been disturbed in the past. The shaft tomb, unique in this complex, consists of a narrow shaft that descends to an underground, domed, chamber, which contained a disarticulated horse, a bronze dagger, some iron artifacts, and other materials (Figure 3). Ceramics similar to those found at the residential component were found in these burials (Aldenderfer and Moyes 2004).

Standing Stones (*Rdo ring*)

A total of three standing stones (*rdo ring*) have been found in the village component of Dindun. One is found within the largest and most complex of the residential structures. Here, the standing stone is seated

within a small niche on the west side of the structure, and has been pushed over from its likely upright original position (Figure 4). The niche surrounding it has been collapsed by this act, but the remains of a small seat composed of a rectangle of stones and a small hole into which the stone was placed are present. The stone itself is made from raw material found in the immediate vicinity of the site, is roughly triangular in cross-section, and is 1.6 m in length. The shaft of the stone itself is smooth, but has not been polished or otherwise modified. Only the tip of the stone has been shaped and modified to make more visually prominent the reddish color of the stone at that end. No other obvious modification, carving, or inscriptions were found elsewhere upon it. No artifacts were found within the chamber that housed it, and a careful examination of the seat, floor, and niche itself revealed no trace of burning or deposits of materials of any kind.

A second stone is found on the eastern margin of the site near the base of one of the Buddhist-era *mchod rten*. It has been toppled, and presently lies within a small, irregular rectangular structure measuring 2.25 x 2.5 metres. These stones are not shaped, nor are they set into the ground in a systematic manner. However, the remnants of a larger rectangular structure are found only a few metres to the east. The southern wall segment, composed of set and coursed stones, is clearly visible on the surface, and although the northern wall segment has been mostly destroyed, enough stones remain to define it. This structure measures 4 x 6 metres. I believe that this is the original structure that housed the standing stone, and that the smaller one was built after both the village and the Buddhist-era constructions were abandoned.

The stone here is triangular in shape, rectangular in cross-section, and 1.7 m in length. This stone has also been modified by the removal of material from its tip, and it has been shaped into its present form. No other carving or treatment is visible upon it. This stone is made from a raw material that is found at the base of a mountain approximately 30 km to the northeast of Dindun called Mumbu, which is recognised today as the protective deity of the region (Aldenderfer 2003).

The third standing stone, also toppled, is found on the west side of the site in the midst of the wall fall from unexcavated residential structures and about 20 m from the gorge that defines the western side of the site. It is very unlikely that this is the original placement of the stone. A search along the western margin of the site, which has been heavily disturbed by Buddhist-era constructions, did not locate a structure sim-

ilar to that which probably housed the stone found on the eastern side of the site. This stone, 86 cm in length, is square at the base, and triangular in form, and shows considerable work to shape it into this form. The top of the stone has been cut straight across, and is not modified like the other two stones: aside from the shaping, the stone shows no other signs of intentional modification. The parent material of the stone is from the base of Mumbu.

In summary, the standing stones from Dindun are phalliform in shape, and placed in two distinct contexts: within a residential structure, probably that of the highest-status family at the site, and at village margins, where they can be seen easily by both inhabitants and those passing by.

Regional Comparisons

Using these three data types—residential architecture, mortuary patterns, and standing stones—I now compare the data from western Tibet to surrounding regions to determine similarities and differences that might help to narrow a preliminary definition of Zhang zhung ethnicity.

The Trans-Himalaya

The archeology of northwestern India, specifically that of Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, and surrounding regions is very poorly known. Singh (2003) reports on the discovery of cist burials in the Kinnaur district in the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh in the Sutlej River drainage. The site, at 3000 m in elevation, was discovered accidentally, and only limited rescue operations were conducted. A single cist tomb was opened. Human remains were discovered along with fragments of a bronze goblet. These cist tombs are circular, lined with undressed stone, and range in depth from 50 cm to 1 m. Aside from being circular in shape, they show no other obvious similarities with the tombs from Dindun. No chronometric dates were run on any associated materials, but the author speculates that the site may range in date from 2500–200 BCE based on the shape of the skull recovered. Tombs of this type are apparently common in the upper Sutlej and surround

drainages, and Singh (2003: 7), reporting unpublished conference papers, suggests that some consensus is beginning to emerge among Indian archaeologists that these tombs, as evidenced by biometric analysis of the skeletal materials found within them, reflect an 'Aryan' population that had moved into the region from the north. However, he also acknowledges that the data supporting this assertion are very sparse.

Franke (1914) reports on cist burials from Leh. These are said to be stone-lined chambers up to 2 m in depth, and which contain in some instances large ceramic vessels in which disarticulated human remains had been placed. The crania from these tombs are said to reflect an 'Aryan' cultural affiliation, but it should be stressed that these materials have not been systematically studied.

Joshi (1994) has reviewed the data from Uttaranchal and has observed that while the lower elevation zones of this state have a deep prehistory, reaching back into the Upper Paleolithic, virtually nothing is known from higher elevations. Iron Age (1000–600 BCE) sites of varying cultural affiliations are found below the Himalayan foothills (Misra 2001), although a few small sites of the Painted Gray Ware (PGW) people are found in Garhwal (Nautiyal *et al.* 1991). Although the area was likely to have been important in early historic times in India, the only direct existing evidence of this is the discovery of Kunindas (2nd century BCE to 1st century CE) coins said to have been recovered from a number of areas ranging from Himachal Pradesh to Uttarranchal (Joshi 1989; 1994).

More significant, but more distant, data have been recovered by the Nepal-German Project on High Mountain Archaeology sponsored by the Institut für Ur-und Frühgeschichte of the University of Köln. Since the early 1990s, the project has been working in Upper Mustang in the Kaligandaki and Muktinath valley systems. There, at three major sites—Chokhopani, Mebrak, and Phudzeling—they have recovered cultural materials ranging in date from approximately 1000 BCE to the late 16th century CE (Simons *et al.* 1994, 1998; Alt *et al*. 2003). They have dated a number of contexts from these sites, and have tentatively identified two early phases in the occupation of the Upper Mustang region: Chokhopani (Mustang Period 1), dating from ca. 800–500 BCE, and Mebrak (Mustang Period 2), dating from 400 BCE to 50 CE. The Mebrak Period is clearly contemporaneous with Dindun.

Collective cave burials found in cliff-face caves of artificial origin have been found in each of the valley systems examined, and range in date from 1000 BCE to 50 CE. The most spectacular of these burials is the collective cave tomb at Mebrak, which dates to Mustang Period 2. Here, the naturally mummified remains of 30 people were found on bed-like wooden coffins with elaborate carving and painting (Alt *et al*. 2003). This mortuary pattern is wholly different from that seen at Dindun. Some of these caves were used as late as ca. 600 CE, but the authors make it clear that these later burials reflect a distinct burial tradition.

Some of the caves were also used as habitations during Mustang Periods 1 and 2 times. Most of these were multi-chambered constructions filled with domestic and residential debris indicative of long-term use. Artificial caves, of course, used as habitations are very common in western Tibet, although they are not found near the village and mortuary contexts at Dindun. More than 1300 caves are known to exist at nearby Piyang (Aldenderfer 2001; Huo and Li 2001), but those examined all date to the Buddhist-era occupation of the region. Some open-air rectangular residential constructions are known from Upper Mustang, specifically from Phudzeling, and these date to the Mustang Period 2. However, these constructions form room blocks that both abut and join, and form complex arrangements of structures. Those from Dindun, in contrast, are free standing structures not joined together in any way. No standing stones have yet been found in an archaeological context in Upper Mustang, although Jest (1975: 296) describes a *rdo ring* standing inside an old village temple in nearby Dolpo.[2]

One of the most interesting findings of the Upper Mustang research is the tentative identification of the biological affinity of the people buried in the caves. Using standard anthropometric analyses, Alt *et al.* (2003: 1533) argue that they are of 'Mongolian' origin, and are likely to have come from somewhere in western Central Asia. While these results must be verified though studies of ancient DNA, they do suggest a movement of people from the plateau to the region as early as 1000 BCE. However, from what we have observed from their mortuary and residential patterns, it is clear that they are not likely to be of the same cultural affiliation as the people who lived at Dindun from 500–100 BCE.

[2] I thank Amy Heller for bringing this to my attention.

The Byang thang

As I have noted above, while Bellezza's reconnaissance surveys are of the greatest importance, they are hampered by an almost complete lack of chronometric data. Thus while he is able to describe the sites he has found, and place them into categories, it remains the case that since there is no control of time, comparisons of the materials from Dindun and elsewhere with the Byang thang and beyond must be made with extreme caution.

Bellezza (2002: 81–86) defines seven types of tombs encountered on the Byang thang: Upper Tibet slab graves, single-course quadrilateral and double-course quadrilateral perimeter graves, oval and round graves, heaped stone wall graves, terraced burials, and *bang so* (elevated tumuli). Visual comparison of his illustrations with the mortuary patterns found at Dindun suggests that three of these types may be found there—Upper Tibet slab graves, single-course quadrangular perimeter, and oval and round graves. Although he does not attempt to place the latter two constructions into a chronological framework, he makes a compelling argument that the Upper Tibet slab tombs most probably fall into a time range beginning at 1000 BCE and continuing into Buddhist times, and have clear affinities to Central Asian examples. However, almost every example illustrated by Bellezza is far larger than the tombs at Dindun. He notes that the Upper Tibet slab tombs may range in maximum dimension from 2–15 m, with many examples having maximum dimensions between 4 and 5 m. While morphologically similar to the Dindun stone rectangles, they are twice as large. Also, most the Upper Tibet slab tombs are empty in their interiors, where as the many of the stone rectangle tombs at Dindun are filled with stones that serve as floors or internal platforms. Thus while there are a number of similarities of tombs in the Byang thang and those recovered at Dindun, there are substantial differences as well.

Bellezza (2001: 30, 130–147; 2002: 77–79) reports on a number of what he calls sedentary villages, and many of these have rectangular constructions within them. However, since he has published few maps or plan views of these constructions, it is difficult to determine how similar they are to Dindun. However, one site—Rdo Dril bu, which is located northwest of Lhasa in Mtsho chen county—has striking similarities to one of the structures at Dindun (Bellezza 2001: 237–43, 411). At least 13 residential and other minor structures are present, and one

of these, labeled by Bellezza the 'Founder's House', is of considerable interest (Figure 5). The structure, the largest on site (thus the derivation of its name), measures ca. 12.5 x 8.6 m, is roofed with stone, and is in relatively undisturbed condition . It is a single-storey construction with seven interior rooms of varying sizes. In plan, it is remarkably similar to the intact parts of Structure 4 at Dindun (Aldenderfer and Moyes 2004; Aldenderfer 2003). Found in a small chamber at the west end of the house is a small, seated standing stone that is 65 cm in height. No artefacts or signs of burning were found in this chamber. The presence of the standing stone, the large doorways, and other architectural details have led Bellezza (2001: 240) to assert that the structure was the residence of a high-status family. The similarities between Structure 4 and the Founder's House are striking. Although the standing stones are shaped somewhat differently and of different size, their location in the structures—in a chamber along the western side of the house—is almost identical. In both cases, they are found within the most complex structures within the village. The similarities of the structures supports the inference that the date of habitation of the Founder's House, and by extension Rdo Dril bu village, is likely to be contemporaneous with Dindun—550–100 BCE

Aside from the *rdo ring* at Rdo Dril bu, Bellezza (2001, 2002) has discovered a large number of standing stones found in various configurations. However, none of these have been found in association with villages or clearly residential architecture, and have no direct analogues at Dindun.

Central Tibet (Dbus Gtsang)

Although the volume of research on the central Tibetan plateau is substantially greater than that elsewhere on the plateau, it remains the case that little research has been done on post-1000 BCE sites. (Aldenderfer and Zhang 2004). Once again, the focus of most research has been on mortuary remains, and extensive classifications of tomb morphology and structure have been developed (Huo 1995; Xiage Wangdui 1998). Unfortunately, few have been dated, so direct comparisons properly situated in time are not feasible. However, Huo and others argue that mortuary patterns of this period are characterised primarily by what they call 'stone coffins', which are square or rectangular in form, and are

made either with large flat slabs for walls and floors, or coursed, uncut stone used to construct walls. An uncommon, more complex form is said to be a stone cist tomb with an entrance, tunnel passage, and central chamber (Huo 1995). Burial goods, if present, tend to be simple decorative objects (stone beads) or small amounts of local ceramics. Burial treatments tend to be flexed, and are often secondary. These tombs reflect a very general similarity to some of the square and rectangular tombs found at Dindun.

No residential architecture has been excavated in central Tibet for this time frame. However, these structures from Dindun are clearly different in their architectural canon when compared to residential and domestic structures from central and eastern Tibet. Most authors, such as Chayet (1994: 127–29), while recognising that this canon has inherent variability due to climatic factors, raw material availability, and historical and cultural influences, suggest that Tibetan houses tend to be multi-storeyed and based on a rectangular plan. Interior courtyards are also common. This idealised form of structure is reflected in Tibetan literature (Karmay 1998c: 201) and aspects of ritual practice in the propitiation of territorial gods in Khyenga in Mustang as recorded by Ramble (1998: 128). Multi-storeyed rectangular structures of this canon have a deep antiquity in central and eastern Tibet at Karou, which dates from 3000–2000 BCE.

Standing stones are uncommon in central Tibet. The best-known *rdo ring* are those typically associated with royal activities, such as that found in Lhasa in Zhol (Snellgrove and Richardson 1995: 91–92), those associated with the Buddhist king Khri Srong lde brtsan near his tomb in Phyong-rgyas (Tucci 1950: 33–40), the *rdo ring* found at the entrance to Bsam yas monastery (Tucci 1950), and the famous boundary marker that served to demarcate Tibetan and Chinese territories erected by Ral pa can in 822 CE (Richardson 1985).

Defining Zhang zhung Ethnicity

Given these comparisons, I am now able to offer a highly conservative and tentative definition of the archeological correlates of Zhang zhung ethnicity in the time frame 500–100 BCE. I should stress that this definition at present does not include religious architecture and non-resi-

dential secular structures, or those structures or burial practices likely to have been used by secular elites.

The architectural canon of residential structures is a free-standing, single-storeyed, rectangular structure, often with internal divisions and rooms. Variation in room number is likely to correlate with size of the domestic group and its wealth and status. Structures are frequently semi-subterranean. Hearth and kitchen areas are found in the south-western corner. There is no apparent attempt to orient structures to a cardinal direction, nor is there evidence that villages are laid out according to a larger spatial plan.

Mortuary patterns are defined by relatively small tombs, either square and rectangular or circular and ovoid. These tombs are for the most part shallowly dug. Stone tombs tend to have stone floors. Tombs without stone walls and foundations are either rectangular or ovoid in shape. It is unknown if these tombs had at one time been covered with mounds of stone. The shaft tomb is unique in the region, and may reflect the burial of a higher-status individual. The orientation of the tombs shows no tendency for alignment to a cardinal direction.

Standing stones appear in village contexts either at their boundaries or within the structures of higher-status or wealthier individuals. The stones are phalliform, and aside from modifications to the tip and general shaping, have no inscriptions or illustrations upon them. They appear singly, and not in groups or sets. Those stones found at village boundaries may have been placed within rectangular enclosures.

Clearly, the peoples living in the trans-Himayala at this time are not likely to have a Zhang zhung cultural affiliation. Their residential and mortuary practices are distinctive. However, the possibility that the inhabitants of Upper Mustang between 1000 BCE–50 CE were likely to have been of 'Mongolian' population affinities raises a number of interesting questions. These peoples could have arrived here as a part of a much earlier migration of peoples from Central Asia, as has been posited by van Driem (1998; 2000: 408–33), or from an as-yet undefined population from elsewhere on the Tibetan plateau.

This definition of Zhang zhung ethnicity has points of contact with Bellezza's (2002: 10) definition of the 'Zhang zhung Mon' archaeological culture. Although he recognises that there may well be many ethnic groups that constitute his definition because of the paucity of chronological control over the sites he has discovered, he nevertheless employs the definition to include all 'pre-Buddhist' sites in the region

of the Byang thang west of 88° East longitude, including all of the cultural materials I have described above as well as other kinds of structures. Those materials that Bellezza describes that fit with my definition of Zhang zhung ethnicity include some of the tomb forms (especially some of the smaller ovoid tombs and the smaller variants of the Upper Tibet slab tomb), one example of residential architecture with the standing stone found within it, and possibly other residential sites with rectangular structures present.

I believe, however, that the use of the term 'Mon' within this context is misleading. The term 'Mon pa' has a number of meanings As Pommaret (1999: 52) notes, the term is used variously to describe groups that have little or nothing in common. It has wide currency in Tibet, and has been used to describe groups from Ladakh to Bhutan. It tends to be an exonym, that is, a term used by some group to denote the ethnicity of some 'other'. The term is of relevance to this discussion because Bellezza (2002: 9) observes that in the oral tradition of those who currently live in the Byang thang, the creators of the archaeological sites within this region are routinely referred to as the Mon pa. Until the many chronological problems archaeologists face in the region are addressed, it is best to avoid terms like Mon in formal definitions.

I think it highly probable that a number of site types defined by Bellezza in his 'Zhang zhung Mon' conception will in fact be of Zhang zhung ethnicity, particularly those that reflect a more sedentary lifestyle. This would include many of the sites in his 'sedentary village' category. Although only one of these at present is known to contain standing stones, not all necessarily participated in the ritual and religious activities that may have brought such stones into them (Aldenderfer 2003). How many of the standing stone complexes he has defined, however, will become Zhang zhung markers is unclear. There are known examples of standing stones in non-village contexts in western Tibet, such as at Pu hrang, where at least three stones are found in a single straight alignment. These resemble the alignment of nine standing stones the site of Rdo ring dkar mo on the Byang thang (Bellezza: 2002: 191).

The definition of the architectural canon of religious structures will be an essential next step in expanding the definition of Zhang zhung ethnicity. Bellezza (2001: 29–30) has defined what he calls 'free-standing religious edifices' which take two forms: large, single-storey multi-roomed stone complexes with buttressed walls found in elevated loca-

tions well above residential habitations, and a subterranean ritual structure mentioned in Bon texts. No archaeological example of such a structure has yet been located. Other forms of religious architecture may also exist and be added to the canon.The most pressing need, however, is a rigorous chronometric dating program within the context of extensive stratigraphic excavation. Once time-sensitive artefact types are defined, it will become possible to integrate many of the surface sites found across the putative Zhang zhung heartland and its neighbouring regions into time, and thus begin to make serious progress toward a more comprehensive definition of Zhang zhung ethnicity in western Tibet.

Bibliography

Aldenderfer, M. 2001. Piyang: A Tibetan Buddhist temple and monastic complex of the 10^{th}–11^{th} Centuries AD in far western Tibet. Archaeology, Ethnology. and Anthropology of Eurasia 4(8), 138–146.

—— 2003. Domestic *rdo-ring*? A new class of standing stone from the Tibetan plateau. *Tibet Journal* 28(1&2), 3–20.

—— and H. Moyes 2004. Excavations at Dindun, a pre-Buddhist village site in far western Tibet. *In* Huo Wei and Li Yongxian (eds) *Proceedings of the International Conference on Tibetan Archaeology and Art*. Chengdu: Center for Tibetan Studies, Sichuan University, 47–69.

—— and Zhang Yinong, 2004. The prehistory of the Tibetan Plateau to the 7th C. A.D.: Perspectives and research from the West and China since 1950. *Journal of World Prehistory* 18(1), 1–55.

—— and K. Alt, J, Burger, A. Simons, W. Schön, G. Grupe, S. Hummel, B. Grosskopf,
W. Vach, C. Téllez, C.-H. Fischer, S. Möller-Wiering, S. Shrestha, S. Pichler and A. Von den Driesh 2003. Climbing into the past—first Himalayan mummies discovered in Nepal. *Journal of Archaeological Science* 30, 1529–35.

Barth, F. 1970. Introduction. *In* F. Barth (ed.) *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries.* Boston: Little, Brown, 9–38.

Beckwith, C. 1987. *The Tibetan Empire in Central Asia*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Bellezza, John. 2001. *Antiquities of Northern Tibet, Pre-Buddhist Archeological Discoveries on the High Plateau, Findings of the Changthang Circuit Expedition,* 1999. Delhi: Adroit Publishers.

—— 2002. *Antiquities of Upper Tibet: Pre-Buddhist Archaeological Sites on the High Plateau. Findings of the Upper Tibet Circumnavigation Expedition*, 2000. Delhi: Adroit Publishers.

Bronk Ramsey, C. 2002. OxCal Program v3.8. Radiocarbon Accelerator Unit, University of Oxford.

Bureau of Cultural Relics 1985. *Tibet Autonomous Region and Department of History*. Sichuan University. Changdu Karou. [Karou: A Neolithic Site in Tibet], Beijing: Cultural Relics Publishing House.

Chung, K. 1960. On Zhang-zhung. *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology*, Academia Sinica 4, 137–54. Taipei.
Chayet, A. 1994. *Art et Archéologie du Tibet*. Paris: Picard.
China Tibetology Institute, Archaeology Department of Sichuan University and Bureau of Cultural Relics, Tibet Autonomous Region. 2001a. Xi zang zha da xian pi yang dong ga yi zhi gu mu qun shi jue jian bao [Brief Report of a Tentative Excavation of Ancient Tomb Groups in Piyang-Dongga Site of Zhada County in Tibet]. *Kaogu* 6, 14–31
—— 2001b. Xizang Zhada xian Gebusailu mudi diaocha [Survey of the Gebusailu Cemetery in Zhada County, Tibet]. *Kaogu* 6, 39–44.
van Driem, G. 1998. Neolithic correlates of ancient Tibeto-Burman migrations. *In* Blench R. and M. Spriggs (eds) *Archaeology and Language* II. London: Routledge, 67–102.
—— *Languages of the Himalayas: an Ethnolinguistic Handbook of the Greater Himalayan Region*. 2 vols. Leiden: Brill.
Emberling,G. 1997. Ethnicity in complex societies: archaeological perspectives. *Journal of Archaeological Research* 5, 295–344.
Franke, A. 1914. *Antiquities of Indian Tibet. Archaeological Survey of India* 38, Part 1: *Personal Narrative*. Calcutta.
Huo Wei. 1995. Xizang Gu Dai Mu Zang Zhi Du Yan Jiu [Studies on Ancient Tibetan Burial Customs]. Chengdu: Sichuan People's Publishing House.
—— 2002a. Xizang a li dong ga fu shi dian tang yi zhi de kao gu fa jue [Excavation of a Buddhist Temple in Ngari, Tibet 2002]. *Wenwu* 8, 34–39.
—— 2002b. Xi zang a li zha da xian xiang quan he liu yu fa xian de liang zuo fu jiao shi ku [Two Buddhist Caves Newly Discovered in Zanda County, Tibet] Wenwu 8, 63–69.
—— and Li, Y. 2001. Xi zang zha da xian pi yang-dong ga yi zhi 1997 nian diao cha yu fa jue [Survey and Excavation of the Piang-Dongga Site in Zanda County, Tibet, in 1997]. Acta Archaeologica Sinica 3, 397–426.
Jest, C. 1975. *Dolpo. Communautés de Langue Tibétaine du Népal*. Paris: Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique.
Joshi, M.P. 1989. *Morphogenesis of Kunindas (circa 200 B.C.–circa A.D. 300): A Numismatic Overview.* Almora: Shree Almora Book Depot.
—— 1994. Early Uttaranchal to Kunindas: an archaeological overview. *Rishi* 1, 67–93.
Karmay, S. 1998. The organization of domestic space. *In* S. Karmay (ed.) *The Arrow and the Spindle: Studies in History, Myths, Rituals, and Beliefs in Tibet*. Kathmandu Mandala Book Point, 200–205. (Originally published in 1987 In P. Vergara and G. Béguin (eds) *Demeure des Hommes, Sanctuaires des Dieux*, Paris: Museé Guimet, 92–98).
Kvaerne, P. 1995. *The Bon Religion of Tibet*: *the Iconography of a Living* Tradition. London: Serindia.
Misra, V.N. 2001 Prehistoric human colonization of India. *Journal of Bioscience Indian Academy of Sciences* 26(4), 491–531.
Nautiyal, B.M., V. Khanduri and D. Rajput 1991. Beginnings of the Iron Age in Garhwal, Mid-Central Himalaya: an ecological overview. *Puratattva* 21, 29–35.
Petech, L. 1997. Western Tibet: historical introduction. *In* D. Klimburg-Salter (ed.) *Tabo: a Lamp for the Kingdom.* London: Thames and Hudson, 229–55.
Pommaret, F. 1999. The Mon-pa revisited: in search of Mon. *In* T. Huber (ed.) *Sacred Spaces and Powerful Places in Tibetan Culture*, Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 52–76.

Ramble, C. 1998. The classification of territorial divinities in pagan and Buddhist rituals in South Mustang. *In* A.-M. Blondeau (ed.) *Tibetan Mountain Deities, their Cults and Representations*. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichschen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 123–43.

Richardson, H. 1985. *A Corpus of Early Tibetan Inscriptions.* London: Royal Asiatic Society.

Sackett, J. 1990. Style and ethnicity in archaeology—the case for isochrestism. In Conkey M. and C. Hastorf (eds) *The Uses of Style in Archaeology.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 32–43.

Snellgrove, D. and H. Richardson. 1995. *A Cultural History of Tibet*. Boston and London: Shambhala.

Singh, A. K. 2003. Cist burials in Kinnaur, Western Himalayas: a preliminary report on recent discoveries. Paper presented at the Fifth World Archaeological Congress, Washington, D.C.

Simons, A., W. Schön and S. Shrestha 1994. Preliminary report on the 1992 campaign of the Institute of Prehistory of the University of Cologne. *Ancient Nepal* 136, 51–75.

—— 1998. Archaeological research in Mustang. *Ancient Nepal* 140, 65–83.

Stein, R.A. 1972. *Tibetan Civilization*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Tucci, G. 1950. *The Tombs of the Tibetan Kings.* Serie Orientale Roma I. Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente.

—— 1956. *Preliminary Report on Two Scientific Expeditions in Nepal.* Serie Orientale Roma X. Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente.

Xiage, Wangdui. 1998. Shixi Xizang shiqian shiguanmu de xingshi yu fenqi. [A tentative analysis of types and dates of prehistoric stone coffin burials in Tibet]. *Xizang yanjiu* 4, 40–44.

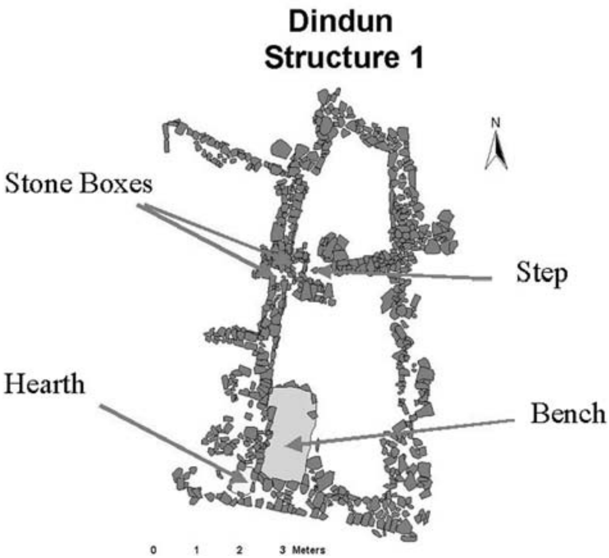


Fig. 1a: Structure 1 from Dindun

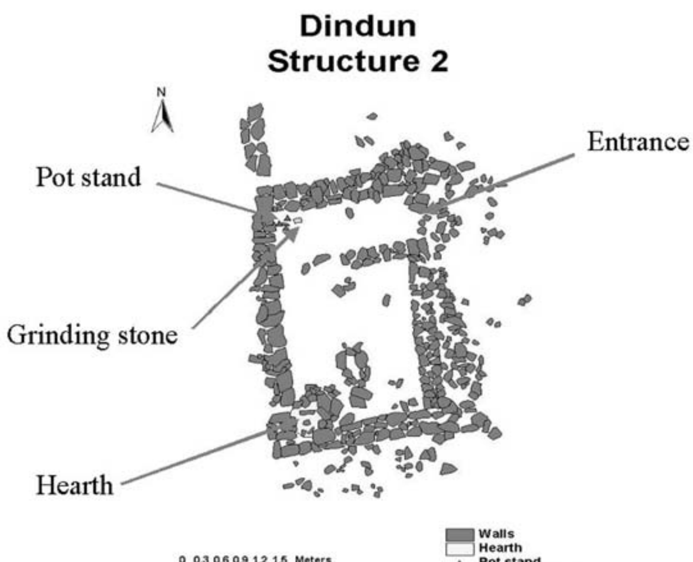


Fig. 1b: Structure 2 from Dindun

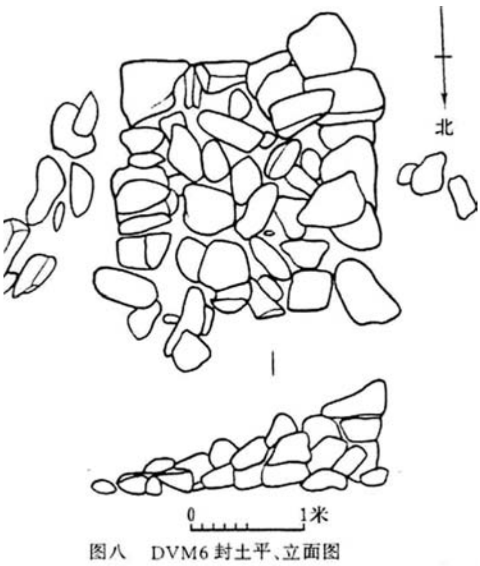


Fig. 2a: Tomb with no stone construction, Dindun (from China Tibetology Institute, Archaeology Department of Sichuan University and Bureau of Cultural Relics, Tibet Autonomous Region, 2001a)

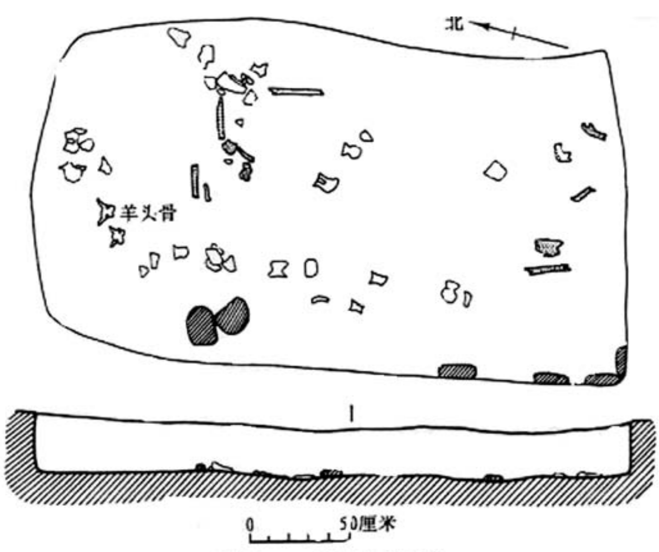
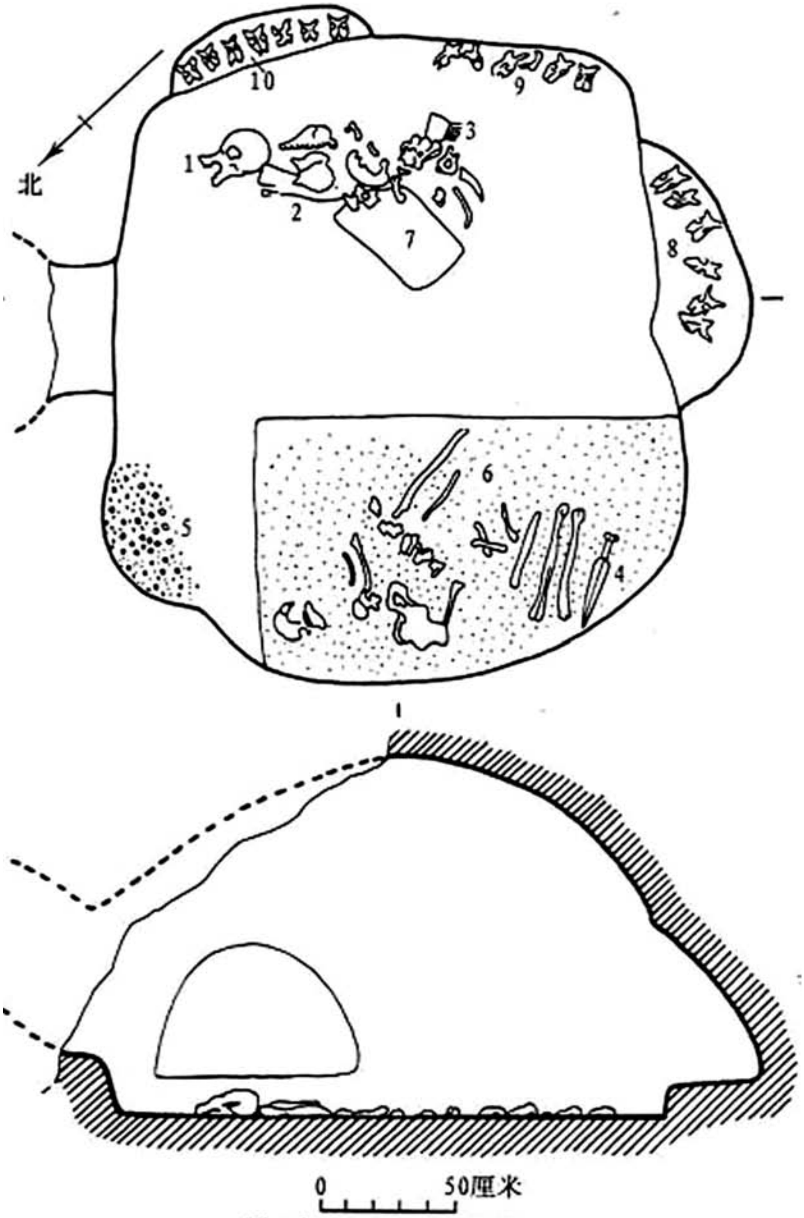


Fig. 2b: Square stone tomb, Dindun (from China Tibetology Institute, Archaeology Department of Sichuan University and Bureau of Cultural Relics, Tibet Autonomous Region, 2001a)



图二七 PGM6 平、剖面图

Fig. 3: Shaft tomb with horse burial, Dindun (from China Tibetology Institute, Archaeology Department of Sichuan University and Bureau of Cultural Relics, Tibet Autonomous Region, 2001a)



Fig. 4: Standing stone found within structure at Dindun

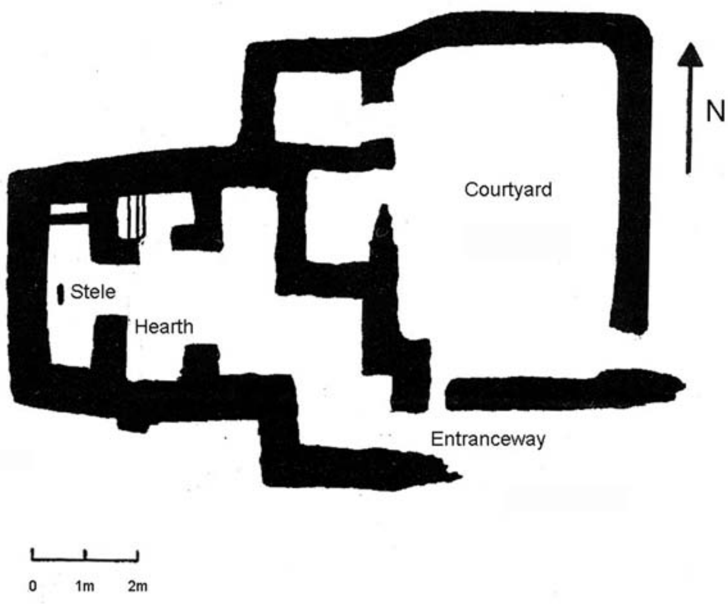


Fig. 5: Plan view of the Founder's House, *rDo Dril bu* (after Bellezza 2001: 411)

NEWLY DISCOVERED EARLY BUDDHIST GROTTOS IN WESTERN TIBET[1]

Huo Wei
Centre for Tibetan Studies of Sichuan University
(Chengdu)

The archaeological investigations of the Glang chen gtsang po basin in Rtsa mda' County of the Mnga' ris area of Tibet began in the 1920s and 1930s. Those conducted between 1928 and 1956 by Giuseppe Tucci were among the most important of these investigations. He made a total of 14 expeditions to the Himalayan area. Between 1928 and 1948 he made eight trips to central and western Tibet, collecting a great volume of extremely important archaeological data.[1] After 1950, Chinese scholars began to pay serious attention to the archaeological studies of this area. When the scope of the survey around the site of the ancient Gu ge Kingdom city of Tsa pa rang was expanded, it was observed that the sites connected to the Gu ge capital city were quite scattered.[2] In recent years, following the archaeological discovery of the Phyi dbang and Dung dkar Buddhist cave sites in western Tibet,[3] the attention of academics was drawn to ancient Buddhist cave art during the Gu ge Kingdom Period in this area. Simultaneously there was an increased encouragement of Chinese scholars to intensify the archaeological surveys in the area. In July 2001, in conjunction with the core scientific research goal of the Chinese National Education Ministry Humanities and Social Sciences Key Research Fund, the archaeological survey team from China's Sichuan University and the Tibetan Autonomous Region's Cultural Relics Bureau made their ninth trip to western Tibet to begin archaeological investigations. In the Glang chen gtsang po basin, they discovered a group of Buddhist cave sites that may belong to the Early Gu ge Kingdom Period. This paper is an analysis of one of

[1] Among the publications of Giuseppe Tucci on the archaelogy of western Tibet the most representative works are *Indo-Tibetica*, published between 1932 and 1941 and the 1973 *The Ancient Civilization of Transhimalaya*.
[2] Zhang Jianlin 1991: 332–331.
[3] Huo Wei 1997: 6–22.

these sites—a preliminary introduction and analysis of the data from Byang rtse Mkhar phug, an early Buddhist site of the Glang chen gtsang po basin near the village called Byang (see Map).

I. Preliminary Analysis of the Mkhar phug Cave Site

The Mkhar phug cave site is situated in *dgun nang*, the winter field of Byang rtse village, about five kilometres west of the village, at about 4260 metres above sea level. The cave site is set in the cliff face of an east-west running flat-topped ridge. The south face overlooks the Byang rtse River, which flows east to west. A broad sloping sandbank is found between the river and the ridge. Short high plains herbaceous foliage grows here, and along the riverbank, highland barley and other crops are grown (Plate 1).

The caves were carved into the south face of the cliff in many scattered groups. Most of these were transformed into grottos. Aside from some traces of smoke and soot in one grotto, they were completely empty. Near its western end, the ridge begins to cut toward the north. At this bend, there are many steep cliff sides that push out to the south. Approximately 2–5 m. above the ground, about 20 caverns of various sizes can be found. Closest to the western section of the ridge, there are two interesting caves, one with early Buddhist wall paintings and another with a *mchod rten* inside. Nearby, there is also a grotto with a wall painting of several later-period Buddhist *dharmapālas*. The survey team took detailed records and measurements of all these grottos. The focus of this paper is to describe the caves that had early period wall paintings. The latter period caves are not within the scope of this paper.

These early ceremonial caves were carved into an area of the ridge that curves inward in an arc. The two cliffs on either side push out just like arms protecting the caves. The cave entrances are oriented primarily toward the south. In appearance, they do not look very regular or square. The openings are approximately 5 metres from the ground and 10 metres from the top of the cliff. The shape of the grottos is square, with a measurement of 4.2 metres tall, 4.2 metres deep, and 4.1 metres wide. The southeast corner of the entrance has collapsed. Clearly visible along the east wall, is a section of a wall built with mud bricks (Plate 2).

In the grottos, each wall and the ceiling have relatively complete paintings dating to sometime between the 10th and 13th century. From the examination of each of the exposed wall sections, we can see that these walls were built after the cave was dug out. On the surface is an adobe brick wall. On the walls' surface a 0.5–1cm layer of grass-ash paste (with many grass clumps) is spread to serve as a base. Superimposed on this is a layer of white ash-mud spread, upon which the murals were created. I will now review the condition of each wall.

North Wall: This wall serves as the focal point of the grotto. The wall's upper portion remains in relatively good condition, but the lower half has flaked off significantly. The composition of the design is as follows: Near the ceiling of the grotto, there are two parallel decorative border lines. there is a line of patterned flowers on a white background and a line of patterned waterfowl facing each other. Together these patterns create lines which frame the central painted panel. A ribbon of pearl beads emerges from the beaks of the waterfowl. Facing the entrance to the grotto there is a painted maṇḍala (Plate 3). On the east and west sides of the image, there are eight vertically arranged small images of the Buddha, all seated and wearing monastic robes. At the four corners of the maṇḍala there are patterns of blooming flowers and minute buds emerging from stems of a plant. The maṇḍala uses a series of linked *vajra*s as its border. Inside the main square, the interior is divided into nine sections. The centre section has the main devotional figure which is very damaged. It appears to be a seated enthroned Buddha, the five-pointed crown is barely distinguishable on his head. His face and robes are white. Two hands are visible. On the very simple throne, the lateral figures are the white elephant, dwarf, *vyāla*, and in the upper section are the *makara* and *garuḍa*. There are groups of figures in all four directions. Except for the lower group, which was too damaged to analyse, each group of figures has a Buddha in the centre; only the skin colour and hand positions are different. In all four directions around these central figures are attendant bodhisattvas. Four goddesses are at the four corners of the intermediary zones of the maṇḍala, opposite each goddess is a vase. Each of the four directions has a square-shaped section that makes up the outer zone. Each section has small Buddhist images with a different pose, but all with halos represented around the head and body. The implements of the dharma they carry are also all different. From the overall arrange-

ment of this maṇḍala, it appears to be a *vajradhātu* maṇḍala. The main Buddha is Mahāvairocana; the four sections have Akṣobhya, Ratnasambhava (south), Amitābha (west), Amoghasiddhi (north), each surrounded by four attendants, i.e. the group of the sixteen bodhisattvas.

West Wall: This wall is basically well preserved and complete. Near the ceiling there are the decorative border lines and the waterfowl pattern as described for the north wall. Although the main part of this wall is also a maṇḍala, the composition is completely different from that of the northern wall. This maṇḍala's inner section consists of a multi-layered lotus flower. In the pistil area of the central lotus flower is the principal deity, but because of significant deterioration, we can only see that the colour of his skin is blue and the left face white. He has eight arms, each holding a dharma implement. He is wearing a *dhoṭī* and he stands in *ālīdha* position (one leg extended, one leg bent at knee) crushing a small demon under his foot. These features lead us to the tentative identification of this divinity as Cakrasamvara. The outer layer surrounding the lotus pistil is made up of eight lotus petals. Of these, six petals have small defenders of the dharma; the two remaining petals have flower vases. There are two additional surrounding layers of petals. The first layer of petals shows six Defenders of the Dharma, each with blue skin, standing on lotus pedestals in *ālīdha* position like the central deity. The outermost petal has six Defenders of the Dharma with white skin. All four sides of the outer zones section have doors. Above the doors are pavillions; and inside each door is a *dharmapāla*. Small wrathful deities in the *ālīdha* position are found at the four corners. There are a total of 36 wrathful attendants surrounding the central deity. At the border of the maṇḍala between the outer section and the blazing circle of *vajras*, there are many types of animals, trees, birds, small divinities riding animals, small figures of humans in athletic postures, *stūpa*s, and other odd things—the content is quite unusual.

Above the maṇḍala, on the left and right corners, are images of flowers and grasses, and under these flowers and grasses are vertically arranged small seated Buddha, each with halos surrounding their heads and bodies, sitting *vajrāsana* on lotus pedestals (Plate 4).

East Wall: The southeast corner of the east wall is mostly destroyed. A maṇḍala is seen in the central position. The composition of the inner section is also a multi-layered lotus flower, and in the central position of the pistil is a Buddha figure with high *uṣṇiṣa*, wearing a monk's

robe. His hands are gesturing in front of his chest and he sits in *vajrāsana*. His halo is oval with a blue line marking its outer edge. Due to deterioration, only six images of the surrounding petals remain, but from looking at the arrangement of the overall picture and the destroyed areas, we can project that there were originally eight sections. Perhaps it represented the 'Eight Treasures' of Buddhism. Another layer of petals, each with a devotional image, is found outside this layer of petals. Because of damage to this wall, there are only six remaining illustrations. Of these, east, south, and west are paintings of Buddhas, whose skin colour and pose are different from the others. The other remaining image is of a Bodhisattva. One speculation is that the content of this maṇḍala could be reflecting the later system of *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana-tantra*. The central Buddha would be Mahāvairocana, dressed in the monastic robes rather than the *dhoṭī* and scarves of the Bodhisattva, making a gesture of enlightenment (*bodhyagrī mudrā*), with his hair in curls. The third circle zone is formed by eight lotus petals and inside each of which is a Buddhist image, thus in total, four Buddhas and four Bodhisattvas. The four Buddhas are all dressed in the garments of Bodhisattva. The Buddha facing the main image is making earth-touching gesture. The Buddha in the south is making a boon bestowing gesture (*varadamudrā*), in the west a meditation gesture (*dhyānamudrā*) and in the north a protection gesture (*abhayamudrā*).

In addition, four Bodhisattvas are painted in southeast, southwest, northwest and northeast. There is a *pāramitā* on each of the four corners of the round maṇḍala the square maṇḍala. Outside the square section are 37 subordinated deities, and at each of the four corners of the inner section there was also a *dharmapāla*. The composition of the outer section also had doors in all four directions, and each door has an elaborate portal. On each there is a *dharmacakra*, reclining deer, *dhvaja*, and other dharma implements. Outside each doorway, there is a *dharmapāla*. Stationed at all four corners of the outer section are devotional figures in the *vajradhātu*maṇḍala. Between the outer section and the blazing *vajra* circle are many more small figures.

Of particular note are the long-haired nude figures above one corner of this maṇḍala, sketched in black lines on the white coloured foundation. They are withered, with bones and skin like bracken, some are sitting, some are standing. This author thinks they may be the *preta* of the six realms of existence (Plate 5).

South Wall: Only the western section of the southern wall remains. The remaining section can be divided into three portions: upper, middle, and lower. The upper section has two decorative border lines, one of which has alternating white and red flowers on a deep blue foundation. The other has, on the same deep blue foundation, white waterfowls facing each other in a horizontal line. In the main part of the central section is an image of a *dharmapāla*. Although the flaking is serious here, we can still recognise that his skin is blue and that one arm is raised holding a weapon. The other hand is holding a rope, the end of which drops down between his legs. He is wearing a broad white belt and his arms are wrapped in silk that flutters to both sides. He stands with bent legs on a lotus platform. Behind him is a halo of flames. Above this are three Buddhist figures. Each has a monk's shawl hanging from its shoulders. Both hands gesture in front of their chests as they sit in *vajrāsana* on high lotus pedestals. To the side are grass and flowers, the sun, moon, and other designs. The lower portion originally had three rows of small figures, but now only the top two rows remain. The first row has 11 people, each of which is sitting on the ground, facing north. From north to south, the first five people wear deep red monastic robes and they sit on cushions with hands folded in front of their chests. The second person has an inscription written next to his head. Unfortunately, the traces of writing are completely unintelligible. The people arranged sixth through eleventh are dressed the same, all wearing long white robes with large collar and wide lapels which cross at mid-chest. The neckline, sleeve cuff, and hem all have broad embroidered bands of deep red. They kneel on one leg, genuflecting sideways on the ground in devotion. The line below this has 12 people whose faces are very similar to those above. Their clothing is similar to that of numbers 6–11 of the line above, and their pose was also the same. From the content of this painting, we can theorise that this is a scene reflecting assemblies where the elite and the clergy came together to listen to the Dharma. Those wearing secular clothes in the painting were quite possibly the people who sponsored this very grotto (Plate 6).

Ceiling: The ceiling of the grotto also has a mural, but it has mostly peeled off. From what we can tell from the remaining portions of the ceiling, it was created in a different manner than the walls. First a layer of white grass-ash paste was applied to the cave wall, and the mural was painted directly on this surface. The painting continued the geometry

and patterns of the other four walls. Each used white lines on black backgrounds to draw round patterns, heart patterns, square diamond patterns, crossed *vajra*, coin patterns, lock character patterns, and all kinds of other themes (Plate 7).

It is important to note that about 8 metres from this grotto, there still stood a grotto with a *mchod rten* inside. Such a grotto with a *mchod rten* inside normally refers to a *stūpa* used by Tibetan monks to hold the remains of eminent monks. This grotto was carved into the centre of a free-standing tower-shaped mound of earth. The cave entrance is about 5 metres from the ground and about 4 metres from the peak of the hill. The opening of the cave faces west and is slightly oval in shape. The ceiling of the cave is arched and the shape of the cave itself is imperfectly square: 3 metres deep × 3.2 metres wide. The four corners are slightly curved. Inside the cave is a *mchod rten*. The *mchod rten* consists of three sections: the base (*seng khri*), the vase (*bum pa*), and the thirteen disks (*chos 'khor bcu gsum*). The upper section and *bum pa* had already been destroyed, with only the base remaining. The base of the *mchod rten* was built with earth and stone bricks. It was then layered with a white ash-paste, and on this a red dye was spread. Because the *mchod rten* was destroyed to the base, it was completely empty (Plate 8).

II. A Preliminary Chronology of the Mkhar phug Cave

There were no inscriptions found at Mkhar phug, but from analysing the composition, art style, and other characteristics of the Buddhist wall paintings, we can provisionally categorise it as a grotto built during the early Gu ge Kingdom (10th–13th century). Below, we will examine this attribution from various angles.

First, the main subject of the murals were all tantric maṇḍalas of later Indian Buddhism. These maṇḍalas mostly had at the centre the five Buddhas of the vajra circle and their *pāramitā*s, the sixteen Bodhisattvas, eight offering goddesses and wrathful *dharmapāla*s. We have seen examples of wall paintings from this period throughout greater west Tibet including those of Ta bo and A lci as well as a number of caves throughout Rtsa mda' county. The author would also point

[4] See Huo Wei 1997: 6–22.

to the similarity between the subject maṇḍalas and those of the recently discovered Dung dkar grotto No. 1.[4]

Second, among the figures arranged on the lower section of the southern wall of this grotto, the people wearing secular clothing are all wearing robes with large triangular lapels, with sleeves long enough to cover their hands. Their lapels, robe edges, and the hems of their pants all have embroidered borders. They also wore tall 'leather' boots. Such clothing is characteristic of western Tibet during the early period. Among the wall murals at Ta bo, A lci, and other remaining temples in this area, as well as those at Phyi dbang and Dung dkar Grottos, while in Gu ge temple wall murals dated after the 15th century, the secular clothing is different. In addition, among the grottos carved in Dun huang during the Tibetan occupation, distinctive types of decorative characteristics appear on the wall murals portraying the Tibetan *btsan po*, dated as early as the 8th to 9th century, including the decorative border pattern of waterfowl with a pearl pattern ribbon in the beak such as seen in the Mkhar phug paintings.[5]

Similar decorative patterns were widespread on early period Buddhist temple walls in the western Himalayan area. The curtains on the south wall of the small *lo tsā wa* hall of Nako Temple in the Lahaul and Spiti district,[6] the curtain pattern of the upper part of the maṇḍala on the first and third floor hall in the A lci Temple,[7] and the wall murals at Ta bo[8] all have similar waterfowl patterns. According to the research of Tucci, Goepper and other scholars, in the ancient western Himalayan Buddhist temples that have this waterfowl with pearl ribbon pattern, due to the rich Kashmiri artistic influence, the early halls cannot be later than 11th–13th century. The historical tradition developed that Rin chen bzang po (958–1055) was responsible for the foundation of many temples, among which Ta bo, A lci and Na ko. Although it is not certain that these temples were personally built by the great translator or through his direct influence, they were at least constructed during or not far removed from his era.[9] The influence of this type of artistic style seems also to have been prevalent in the Glang chen gtsang po basin of the central district in the Gu ge Kingdom. In recent archaeological

5 See Huo Wei 2001: 411–432.
6 See Klimburg-Salter 1997: Fig. 199
7 See Goepper and Poncar: 1996: 51.
8 See Klimburg-Salter 1997: Fig. 205, 206.
9 See Goepper and Poncar 1996: 158.

examinations this kind of waterfowl pattern has been found in two Buddhist grottos at the Dge ri site on the south bank of the Glang chen gtsang po[10] and at Mtho gling, one of the most famous Gu ge temples. Furthermore, the archaeological excavations at Sa skya, in the Brgya rtsa lha khang, the early period hall, have revealed the remnant of a wall with this theme.[11] Because of this data, our preliminary conclusion is that the Buddhist grotto in Mkhar phug could not have been completed after the 13th century. It was most probably built around the 11th–12th century.

The grotto with a *mchod rten* inside and the Buddhist ritual grotto discovered at Mkhar phug were both built in a very similar style and the carving techniques are also very much alike. Although at present we still lack data that could specifically identify the time period of the Grotto with a *mchod rten*, we can estimate that the period should not be too far removed from the period of the Buddhist ritual grotto. They are probably of the same era.

III. The Relationship of Byang rtse Mkhar phug to the Early Grottos of Mnga' ris

The data of Mkhar phug raises many questions. What, if any, relationship do the Gu ge Kingdom grottos have with each other? What position do they have in the Buddhist history and artistic history of the Gu ge Kingdom? With the extremely limited written data currently available, it seems premature to answer these questions. However, this does not mean that we cannot postulate a few logical hypotheses and point to some lines of thought and inquiries for further investigation.

It is well established in the history of the Gu ge Kingdom that in the 10th and 11th centuries, because of the strong influence of the great masters Rin chen bzang po and Atīśa, with the support of the Gu ge kings, Buddhism experienced a vast expansion. Throughout the Kingdom, Buddhist temples were built and Buddhist grottos carved out. From Kashmir and India came a great number of artists, invited to Gu ge to

[10] See Huo Wei 2002: 63–69.

[11] The data from the excavation of this temple is still being organized, but through the kindness of the excavation supervisor, Mr. Zhang Jianlin, I have seen the wall remnant from the excavation site.

guide this series of religious construction projects. It is quite probable that many Gu ge artists went to these outlying areas to learn from those artists before returning to Gu ge to take part in the construction there. One can imagine that aside from the several temples for which we have written records,[12] other areas would have naturally followed suit and built temples and carved out grottos. Although we cannot find records of a Buddhist temple at Byang rtse mkhar phug in the lists of the most famous Buddhist temples, I believe that this archaeological investigation clearly shows that Byang rtse was a relatively large-scale Buddhist temple site.

Today this Buddhist temple site, called Byang ba Temple by the locals, sits high on a sloping field running northwest about 1 kilometre, on what is now the Shang ba village of the Byang rtse village group. From my preliminary investigations, the southern end of this temple site faces the east-to-west flowing Byang rtse river, and the northern end of the site is on a gently rising hill. It seems to be primarily arranged from east to west. The temple buildings are about 30 metres above the surface of the Byang rtse River. Topographically, the western terrain is flat while the eastern terrain has more relief. The Byang ba Temple is arranged on a hill slope that gradually widens toward the east. The site measures approximately 500 metres east-west by 300 metres north-south. The main compound is made up of halls, towers, and other buildings, the former primarily concentrated in the eastern end and the latter at the western end of the site. The four sides of the site show walls of tamped earth, of which the eastern wall is still well preserved while the other three have only collapsed remnants of walls. The site buildings can be attributed to at least two construction periods—the earlier characterised by the tamped earth walls and the later by earthen bricks—covering an extensive time period. This archaeological discovery makes it clear that historically the Byang rtse area was an important centre of religious culture. The Buddhist temples surrounded what is now called the Byang ba Temple, thus, except for special occasions, the local people had little need to go to the capital of Gu ge to worship, especially since they could fulfil the basic needs of their religious belief locally. Similarly, within the boundaries of the Gu ge Kingdom , the temples were not isolated. Modern archaeological inves-

[12] It is recorded that in the Rin chen bzang po era, the earliest eight temples included Mtho gling, Khor chags, Ta bo and other famous temples.

tigations have discovered many secondary centres or ‘satellite cities’, both large and small. Mdo shang, Ma nang, Mda’ pa, and Mkhar phug are among these numerous sites. Almost without exception, all have remains of Buddhist temples and grottos carved into cliff walls, along with castles at the peaks of mountains and other structures. Aside from religious significance, it is quite possible that at the same time this was also the area’s political, cultural, and military centre.[13]

As mentioned above, the newly discovered Mkhar phug grotto site is only 5 kilometres from the Byang ba Temple site. There have been no large-scale religious sites found between the two, so it is very possible that there was a mutual relationship. Although to date, there is no archaeological evidence that would affirm that the construction of the Buddhist temple began in the 11th century, this is not so difficult to believe. As the area’s temple, the possibility that it would have undergone repairs and rebuilding is much greater than a grotto that is hidden in a cliff face. From what we can see in the archaeological information thus far, there are very few grottos that have been discovered that had broken away from a central temple and established independently. Because of this rationale, we cannot eliminate the possibility that the Mkhar phug grotto might have been subject to the Byang ba Temple. Of course, this conjecture still needs much more evidence to substantiate it. Perhaps in the future someone will do a complete archaeological excavation of the Byang ba Temple to provide the conclusive evidence.

Looking at this from the perspective of religious art, the murals at the Mkhar phug grotto reflect that beyond having advanced artistic skills, the artists who painted the murals were able to accurately reflect the religious meaning contained in the images, as discussed in section II. I do want to emphasise that the carving of the grottos in this area and the paintings inside them were completed by accomplished and skilled artists, such that we cannot exclude the possibility that the power base from which they derived might have been from the centre of Gu ge kingdom where artists from Kashmir and India gathered. This clearly shows the ability and popularisation of Buddhist art of the period. Also, when viewed from another angle, it shows that Byang ba Temple, as a ‘secondary city’ or ‘satellite city’ historically received a great deal of attention from the Gu ge Kingdom, and should have held a pivotal position. These newly discovered grotto sites give us a deeper understand-

[13] See Li Yongxian, Huo Wei and Dge ’dun 1994.

ing of the development, transmission, and influence of the religious art of the Gu ge Kingdom. This will undoubtedly add new and valuable data for our archaeological research and excavations and ultimately will help to recover a picture of Gu ge society based on a capital city and secondary centres.

This article received funding from the Chinese National Education Ministry Humanities and Social Sciences Key Research Fund and the Chinese National Cultural Relics Bureau Border Areas Archaeological Fund for which we here offer our deepest appreciation. Constructive criticism from Thomas J. Pritzker and Amy Heller is gratefully acknowledged. The article has been translated into English by David Hull of the Department of East Asian Studies, UCSB.

Bibliography

Goepper, R. and J. Poncar 1996. *Alchi: Ladakh's Hidden Buddhist Sanctuary*. London: Serindia Publications.

Huo Wei. 1997. Archeological survey briefing of the Tibetan Dung dkar and Phyi dbang caves in Mnga' ris area. *Wen Wu, Cultural Relics* 9, 6–22.

Huo Wei. 2002. Two Tibetan grottos found in the Glang chen gtsang po Basin in rTsa-mda' county, mNga' ris, Tibet. *Wen Wu, Cultural Relics* 8, 63–9.

Huo Wei and Li Yongxian. 2001. *The Buddhist Art in Western Tibet*. Chengdu: Sichuan University Press.

Klimburg-Salter, D. 1997. *Tabo: A Lamp for the Kingdom: Early Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Art in the Western Himalaya.* Milan: Skira.

Li Yongxian, Huo Wei and Dge 'dun. 1994. Records of cultural relics in mNga' ris District, Lhasa.

Tucci, G. 1932–1936 *Indo-Tibetica*. Roma: Reale Accademia d'Italia.

—— 1937. *Santi e briganti del Tibet ignoto*. Milano: Hoepli.

—— 1973. *The Ancient Civilization of Transhimalaya*. London: Barrie and Jenkins.

Tucci, G. and E. Ghersi 1966. *Secrets of Tibet*. London/Glasgow: Blackie and Son Ltd.

Zhang Jianlin 1991. *The Ancient Cities of the Guge Kingdom.* Beijing: Cultural Relics Publishing.



Map: Western Tibet and surrounding areas



Plate 1: Byang rtse, Mkhar phug, general view

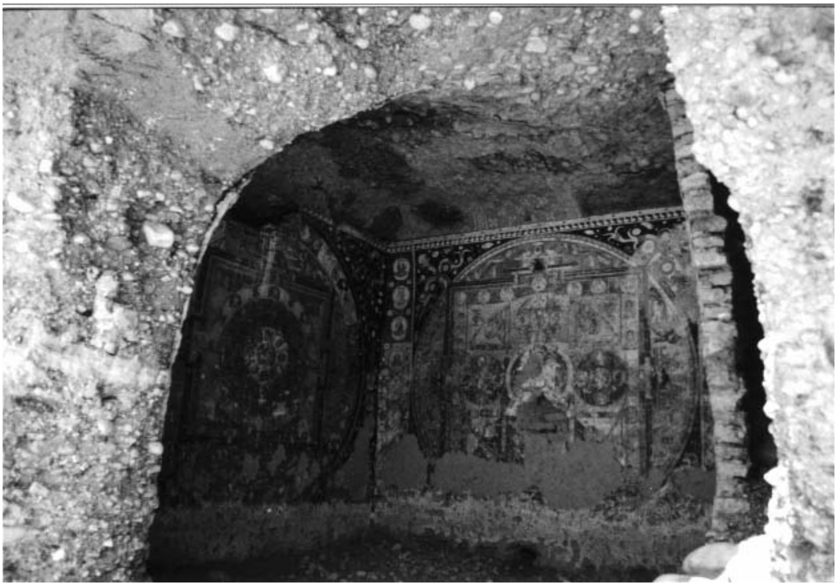


Plate 2: Byang rtse, Mkhar phug, brick wall construction of cave



Plate 3: Byang rtse, Mkhar phug north wall: maṇḍala of Mahāvairocana

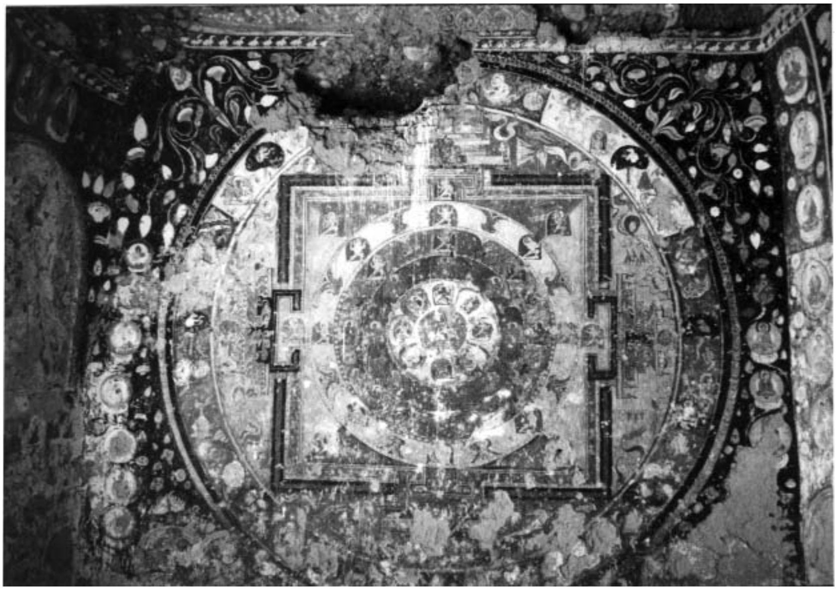


Plate 4: Byang rtse, Mkhar phug west wall: maṇḍala of Cakrasamvara (?)



Plate 5: Byang rtse, Mkhar phug east wall: detail of *preta*



Plate 6: Byang rtse, Mkhar phug south wall: detail of donors



Plate 7: Byang rtse, Mkhar phug ceiling: painted geometric and floral patterns



Plate 8: Byang rtse, Mkhar phug

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE EMPTY SHELLS OF NYAR MA

GERALD KOZICZ (GRAZ)

Nyar ma monastery lies in the Indus Valley south of Khrig rtse monastery in Ladakh, India. According to the tradition it was founded by Rin chen bzang po (958–1055), and it was probably his largest and most important foundation in this region (Snellgrove and Skorupski 1977: 19; Snellgrove and Skorupski 1980: 91).

Due to the total removal of the individual temples' roofs in the past, the compound has been completely neglected and thus remained largely unstudied by scholars of Himalayan art. Apart from a few traces of paint and fragments of mandorlas, all the artistic decorations, such as murals and sculptures, have been destroyed by wind and rain. Despite the compound's dilapidated condition, the remaining walls of the five temples, about a dozen *mchod rten* and the fragments of the former compound wall manage to give an impressive insight into the former sacred area (Figs. 1, 2).

These provide precious sources of information for the study of ancient Buddhist architecture in the western Himalayas. It is noteworthy that the buildings in Nyar ma were erected with an extraordinary precision. This has facilitated the accurate measurement of the extant architectural elements and the conceptual analysis of the layout and geometric patterns. This article concentrates on two buildings within the compound:

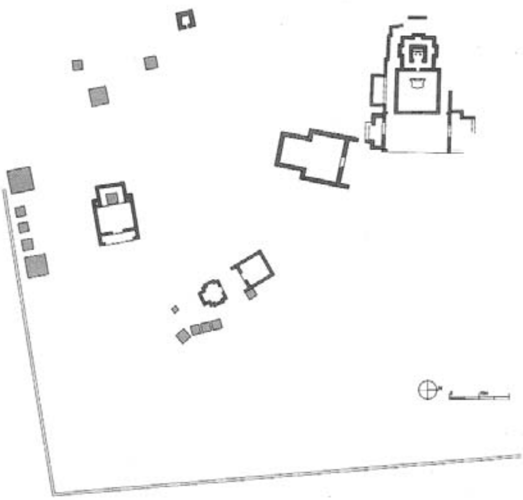
(1) The Nyar ma Main Temple (NMT), a large complex consisting of many parts, situated in the northwest, which appears to be the most important temple.

(2) The Mchod rten Temple (CT), situated in the southern part of the walled compound, contains segments of a *mchod rten* inside its cella area.

By utilising these two monuments as examples, the present article will study the geometry of the architectural forms and reconstruct the process of their architectural design in order to examine the transformation of the ideal Buddhist conceptualisation of space, the maṇḍala, into an architectural plan.



General view of Nyar ma



Map of the former Chos ’khor

Let us quote remarks by Giuseppe Tucci to introduce the methodology of our approach of Buddhist architectural design. Tucci remarked that "the temples in Western Tibet inherit the value of a proper maṇḍala", but it may be doubtful that he was aware of just how strongly his theory corresponded with the actual architectural form (Tucci 1988: 159–60). The following investigation was based on the assumption that all temples conform to this concept, not only those temples which have obvious geometric relations to the pattern of a maṇḍala, but also those that do not appear to share any geometric similarities with a maṇḍala order. Consequently all temples should be considered as maṇḍalas, as built representations of an ideal architectural plan.

Starting with the NMT we have an example of an architectural layout displaying obvious analogies to the geometric order of a maṇḍala. Figure 1 depicts those parts of its complex building structure which in former days created the innermost spatial elements and originate from the first construction phase. This core strongly recalls the Ta bo Main Temple (TMT), since they both take as a basis three spatial elements—an assembly area, an ambulatory and a cella. But two major differences are apparent: the exterior ambulatory surrounding the NMT is completely absent in Ta bo; also there are three side niches in the NMT ambulatory which are absent in Ta bo. These niches reinforce the impression of the concept of a maṇḍala.

For the purpose of this article I shall introduce specific terms in order to clarify the geometric description:

The interior shape of a wall will be called interior square (or rectangle), the exterior shape exterior square (rectangle). Consequently the index 'i' (e.g. Ai) is provided for a corner at the inside area (point of the interior square), the index 'e' for the exterior counterpart (e.g. Be).

The analysis of the layout plan provides a number of interesting geometric facts:

1. All rooms are based on a square.

2. The diameter of the ambulatory is identical with the side length of the assembly area. In other words: a circle drawn from the central point M1 through the corners (Bi) of the ambulatory fits exactly into the assembly area. This same circle also includes the point Ne of the niches. Therefore the dimension of the ambulatory area corresponds with the assembly area in two ways.

3. The cella's exterior square measures half the size of the ambulatory's exterior square. The two equal distances AeBe and AeM1 demonstrate this.

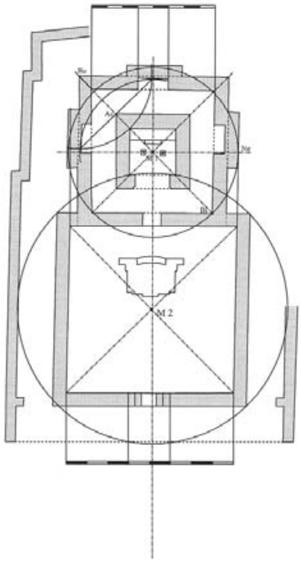


Figure 1: Floor plan of NMT. The main axis faces East-West

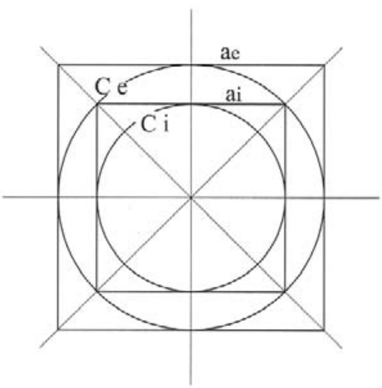


Figure 2: First principle of spatial design

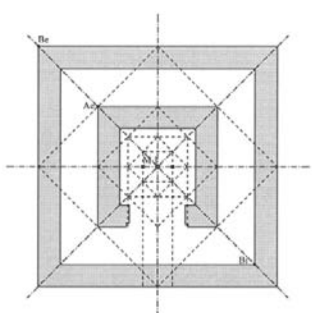


Figure 3: Cella and ambulatory

4. The niches' opening is a quarter of the ambulatory's wall length. The same relation occurs in the entrance area of the assembly hall, where a number of structural joints mark the opening of the former, original door.

5. A circle drawn through the corners of the assembly hall's exterior square defines the spatial dimension of the exterior ambulatory, which once enclosed all the core elements.

The key to understanding the geometric and proportional grid of a temple's plan can be found in the interrelation between the two geometric elements, the square and the circle, which also form the basis of the geometry of the maṇḍala. The actual proportional order can be derived from the relation of a square and its adjoining or relating circles. Although the mathematical formula (Ci:Ce = ai:ae = 1:√2 = 1:1,414) seems very complicated, the geometric figure (Fig. 2) already suggests that the idea is very simple. In fact, a simple rope is all one needs in order to transform the idea into an architectural plan and into a setting of architectural elements on the construction ground. A rope makes it possible to carry out all the necessary operations, thus allowing a methodical merging of the metaphysical concepts of the maṇḍala with the practical aspects of planning and constructing a building. The result is a structure of great architectural complexity, which highly serves as a perfect sphere for the Buddhist ritual. This geometric method of development of spatial relations is the first principle of spatial design.

As a result the design process can be redrawn as a sequence of geometric operations:

Figure 3 depicts the ambulatory and the cella. If the operation for halving the distance between Be and M1 is carried out at all diagonals, the result is a square, which is tilted at 45° from the position of the original square. If this operation is continued inwards, the result is a series of squares, whose geometric structure corresponds with the type of maṇḍala ceiling often found in Ladakh, especially inside *mchod rten* dating from the early period of Buddhism (e.g. in A lci and Man gyu). Every second square is positioned parallel to the original one. Interestingly, every one of these (the 2nd, 4th and 6th) dictates an important structural position. The 2nd square sets the position of the cella's exterior square, the 4th defines the size of the cella's opening towards the ambulatory, whereas the 6th marks the axis of the columns inside the cella as well as the opening from the ambulatory to assembly area.

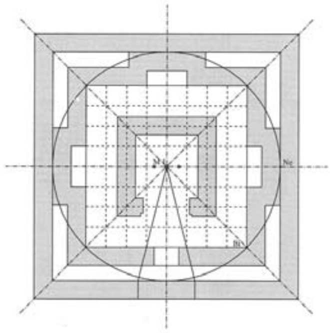


Figure 4: The square assembly hall surrounding the innermost core of the building structure

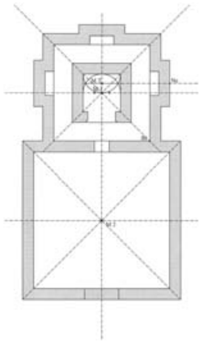


Figure 5: Development of the actual spatial order

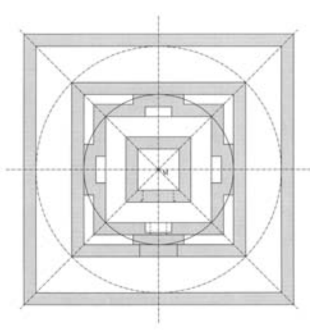


Figure 6: The basic cosmogram with the square of the external ambulatory

This operation is identical with the first principle only here it is applied in an alternative pattern (see Fig. 2).

Figure 4 already shows the relation between the ambulatory, its niches, the enclosed cella and the assembly hall. In addition it reveals a grid of 64 squares (8×8), laid upon the interior square of the ambulatory as a consequence of the identified relation between the ambulatory's size and the niches' opening (see above). It becomes apparent that the spatial order of this central area is a superimposition of two operations, namely the first principle and the division of the maṇḍala space (cf. Brauen 1992: 74–75) into 9×9 or 8×8 squares. Figure 4 also clearly illustrates the relation between the ambulatory and the assembly hall where the architectural elements are all drawn as a unit around a common central point (M1).

In the next step (Fig. 5) the two major parts are then shifted apart along the main axis (running East-West), creating the final spatial order. A further significant step, with regards to the positioning of the lateral niches, is taken. By shifting the niches 'backwards' their new axis no longer lines up with the ambulatory's, but with the front line of the main deity's throne in the cella. With that we can now identify three secondary axes within the whole structure: one through the centre of the assembly hall, another through the centre of the ambulatory and finally the most important one in front of the main figure, creating the very centre of the whole sphere.

Figure 6 depicts the addition of the exterior ambulatory to the core building. It explains the transformation from initial square form to the polygonal stretch of wall that surrounds the transformed core structure at a constant distance. Figure 6 is identical to the architectural plan of the core of the NMT, resulting from a complex process of form development. The starting point of this process, the initial point of reference, may be found in the geometric structure of the cosmogram of Figure 7. To understand the built architecture it is therefore necessary to extend the term architecture towards this initial phase of planning, where the complete concept is shown. As in the case of some walls and the eastern niche, which were 'significantly modified or deleted' during the design process, some elements do not appear in the final architectural plan any more. Therefore it is necessary to imagine those 'un-built' parts of the maṇḍala, thus allowing for the concept of the building, on the basis of which the plan was developed, to be grasped.

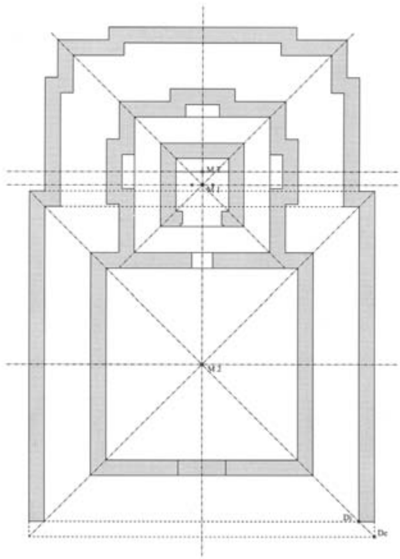


Figure 7: The final result of the form development

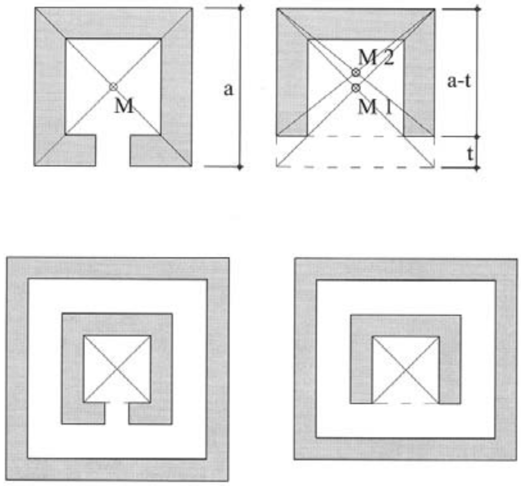


Figure 8a (above) and 8b (below)

Looking at the second example of this architectural analysis, the Mchod rten Temple bears hardly any geometric relation or similarity with the geometric conceptualisation of a maṇḍala. Within the context of Buddhist architecture a building such as this would normally be described as "an almost square assembly hall with an adjoining, rectangular main niche, which includes the remains of a *mchod rten*". Not only is this building constructed upon the same geometric principles as the NMT, it also has a similar basic cosmogram. Before we continue, it is necessary to return to the NMT, as it provides evidence for another important principle of form development. This second principle plays a very minor role in the design of the NMT, but because it is crucial for the understanding and reading of the CT's plan, is worth a mention. It occurs in the area in front of the assembly hall's entrance, where the wall of the exterior ambulatory is completely missing. The explanation: the walls, including the sections shared with the lateral walls, simply had not been built. It seems that whenever one wall of a square unit was omitted, the entire wall remained un-built.

The ambulatory surrounded the core on three sides only. The lateral walls do not extend towards the exterior front-line (De), but are only carried out towards the interior one (Di). If the lateral parts had been completed, the realised spatial sphere would have been turned into a rectangle. Apparently this had to be avoided. On the other hand this second principle produced a rectangular form for all the ambulatory spaces, as long as the distance to the centre with the now U-shaped walls was constant. This second principle is illustrated in Figure 8a and Figure 8b (8a depicting the square pattern as used in NMT's cella and, in comparison, Fig. 8b's rectangular U-shaped variant). The consequent alteration of the surrounding squares is shown in figure 8b.

But analysing the CT requires not only application of the second principle, but also one prerequisite: one must presume that the centre of an architectural maṇḍala is either a square or a circle. In the CT's case, parts of the central area, or to be more precise, part of its room-size determining, surrounding walls, have not been built. In other words: the rectangular niche area, which is created by the U-shaped order of walls and consequently open towards the assembly area, is only a partial realisation of its conceptualised space. If one assumes the *mchod rten* to be the structure's very centre and the completion of the niche area's unbuilt walls in order to re-create the square, the idea of the behind the plan immediately becomes apparent (Fig. 9). The centre of the *mchod*

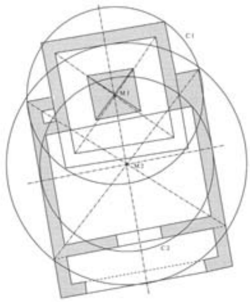


Figure 9: The floor plan of the Mchod rten temple with its basic geometric relations

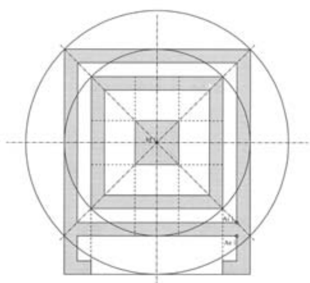


Figure 10: The basic configuration of the four spatial elements

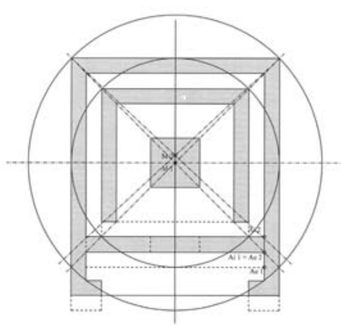


Figure 11: The entrance wall moves inwards according to the second principle

rten coincides with the centre of the ambulatory's square. The first principle can also be identified as the proportional pattern upon which the relation of spatial dimensions is based. In addition, the side length of the *mchod rten's* square is approximately a third of the ambulatory's exterior square's side length and is also identical to the entrance opening of the assembly hall. It is noteworthy that the door was certainly not the size of the current opening. The current dimension of the opening is most likely the result of a structural particularity, similar to the joints found in the front wall of the NMT's assembly hall.

In terms of the demonstrable geometric relations it is now possible to re-draw the development of the architectural form. Figure 10 illustrates the basic square of the *mchod rten* as a central square of nine, into which the exterior square of the ambulatory has been divided. This division is a variation on the division a maṇḍala's space into 9×9 fields (9 = 3×3).

From this point onwards the predominant aspect of geometric planning is based on the ambulatory's un-built and eastward-facing front wall. Since it is missing, the surrounding assembly hall becomes a rectangle. It is illustrated in figure 11 by the inward move of the assembly hall's front wall (by a wall's thickness), i.e. interior corner of the front wall moves from position Ai1 to Ai2 and Ai1 becomes Ae2. Thus the second principle of form development has been applied and explains why the assembly area is a rectangle instead of a square.

Figure 12 sums up the re-organisation of architectural spaces along the main axis. The total expansion of the space is defined by another circle drawn from the new centre point of the assembly hall through the corners of its exterior square.

The most important conclusion drawn from the analysis of the CT, is as follows: since implementing the second principle also affects all surrounding elements adjacent to the part, to which this principle had been initially applied, the whole form must have been developed around a single, common centre right from the beginning. Without this approach based on a geometric cosmogram, every spatial segment designed would have lacked interaction with other segments; therefore the square of the assembly hall would not have been altered to a rectangle. It becomes evident that the proportion of spatial elements has been developed from the centre outwards.

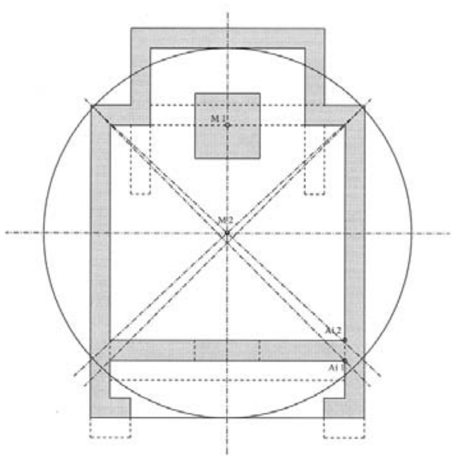


Figure 12: Reorganisation of the architectural elements along the main axis

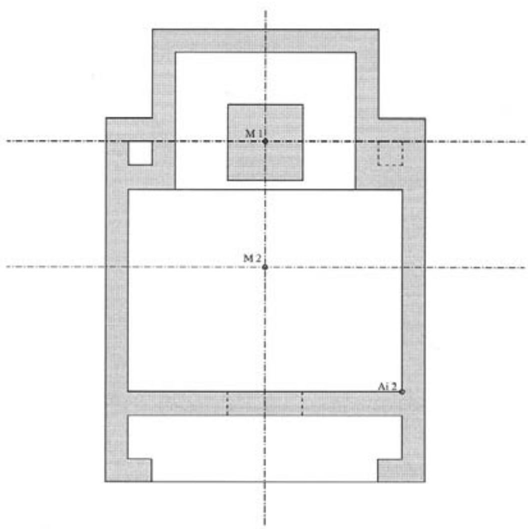


Figure 13: The move of the two lateral segments of the facing wall towards the centre M2

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the architectural remains belonging to the once sacred Nyar ma compound provides us with new insights about ancient Buddhist architecture in the western Himalayas. As any position within such a kind of architectural order exactly coincides with (or is related to) a certain area of the maṇḍala plan, all decorative elements need to be evaluated according to their positions, too. Consequently the interrelation between architecture and artistic decoration may appear in a new light, both on a physical (as an immediate experience of the space) and metaphysical level (as ritual space). In fact, despite typological differences, all temples may be understood as maṇḍalas.

The prevailing principles of architectural design that have been demonstrated for these two structures in Nyar ma are also to be found, apart from in Ta bo, in other places in Ladakh that can be related to Rin chen bzang po (Kozicz, forthcoming). There is evidence to back the assumption that these methodological aspects of architectural design were prevalent during the eleventh century (for instance, the second principle was not carried out in A lci 200 years later). Future research will seek to compare this design aspect to the iconometric patterns of contemporaneous temples from other regions. As far as the regions of the Western Himalayas are concerned, architectural analysis may become an important tool when investigating a particular monument's general background, and may even provide chronological clues.

Due to the current state of research it is possible to redraw the design process of an architectural structure and re-create the basic cosmogram of an 11th century monument built in the western Himalayas. Even though the geometry of a particular spatial configuration and therefore a building's iconometry can be explained, more interdisciplinary research will be necessary to explain why a certain basic cosmogram or final typological solution was chosen to be applied to a certain site, especially in terms of ritual context.

Bibliography

Brauen, M. 1992. *Das Mandala*. Der Heilige Kreis im tantrischen Buddhismus. Cologne: DuMont Buchverlag.

Klimburg-Salter, D. 1997. *Tabo: a Lamp for the Kingdom*. Milan: Skira.

Kozicz, G. forthcoming. Iconometry of Early Buddhist Temple Architecture in the Western Himalayas. (In preparation.)

Snellgrove, D. and Skorupski, T. 1977. *The Cultural Heritage of Ladakh*, vol. 1. Warminster: Aris and Phillips.

Tucci, G. 1935. *I templi del Tibet occidentale e il loro simbolismo artistico*. Indo-Tibetica III. Rome. (English Translation 1988. The Temples of Western Tibet and Their Artistic Symbolism: the Monasteries of Spiti and Kunavar. New Delhi).

Note

I am grateful to the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) for generously supporting this project.

The plans presented in this paper are based on an architectural survey conducted in 2002 by Wolfgang Heusgen and the author. The author would like to thank Wolfgang Heusgen for sharing an inspiring time in the field, also Nene Nikolaus for technical support and Jacqueline Pucher for the translation.

Brauen explains the geometric grid of the Kālacakramaṇḍala by superimposing a square divided into 8×8 fields upon the painted maṇḍala. He also mentions that the structure of the Vastumaṇḍala may be based either on the 8×8 or the 9×9 grid.

The comparison with the Ta bo Main Temple (cf. Klimburg-Salter 1997: 72) as presented at the seminar in Oxford is not included here, as the number of plans would have gone beyond the space available for this article.

THE DIVINE PALACES OF THE BUDDHA: ARCHITECTURAL FRAMES IN WESTERN HIMALAYAN ART[1]

MARIALAURA DI MATTIA

In Indian Buddhist art, at least since Gandhāran period (1st–5th c. CE), it is customary to enclose Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and other prominent personages inside architectural frames. For example, in the golden reliquary from Bīmarān (Afghanistan), now in the British Museum, a sequence of Buddhas, Hindu Gods, devotees, are indeed all contained within arched niches. The architectural forms that appear on the Bīmarān reliquary reflect the regional cultural milieu of Afghanistan in that period.

The combination of different forms and patterns in the Himalayan architectural frames is definitely more rich and complex than in the early specimens from India.[2] Through the centuries, the Indian architectural prototypes developed and became highly differentiated, due to regional and cultural-historical criteria, as well as building materials. Hence, the distinctive architectural production of Buddhist India was reaped as a mature fruit by the Tibetan artists, and combined with the local traditions, feelings, creativity and taste: then the various styles were elaborated giving rise to a whole series of unique, original interpretations of the Buddhist sacred space in Tibet and the Western Himalaya .

There is a vast quantity of examples to study among Indian architectural frames. Primarily one finds sculptured examples, such as the *stūpa* basement known as the 'double-headed eagle shrine' at Sirkap (Taxila), or a fragment showing a devotee within a *toraṇa*, from Butkara I (Swāt), now in the National Museum of Oriental Art in Rome.[3]

1 I wish to thank Massimiliano A. Polichetti, for his constant advice, Amy Heller for her suggestions and constructive criticism, besides *bla ma* Bstan 'dzin of Lha lung and *dge bshes* Bsod nams dbang 'dus of Ta pho; thanks are also due to Francis Tiso and Oscar Nalesini.

2 This paper does not pretend to be exhaustive about all the representations of architecture in Western Himalayan temples. Above all, here we are not concerned with the well known A lci *gsum brtsegs* and Ta pho *gtsug lag khang*; among the abundant literature avaliable on the subject, see the richly illustrated works of Snellgrove and Skorupski 1979, Khosla 1979, Pal and Fournier 1982, Goepper and Poncar 1996, Handa 1994, van Ham and Stirn 1997, Klimburg-Salter 1997.

3 See Callieri and Filigenzi 2002: 169, Fig.72.

Among the early depictions of architecture in Indian Buddhist art, one of the richest series of typologies is represented on the east *toraṇa* at Sāñcī, datable to the first half of the 1st century CE. The relief carved on the median stone panel of the north pillar (rear face) it is said to depict the city of Kapilavastu (Plate 1).[4] The palaces of Siddhārtha are enlivened by the people peeping out of the balconies and by the rhythmic rendering of the procession, headed by the king in his chariot, which winds among the buildings and creates an illusion of depth and distance. On the higher terrace, queen Māyā reclines on a couch, dreaming the elephant which heralds her conception. Māyā lies under a rectangular pavillion, with a barrel shaped roof (*śālā*) decorated with a protruding *candraśālā*.[5] The *candraśālā* opening is repeated along the various roof levels of the palaces, exposing the cross-section of vaulted timber roofs, with wooden ribs arching above. Brackets, rafters, loggias, porticoes and balconies, particularly the railing motif where the cross-bars are lenticular in section as in a wooden fence, clearly recall their timber models. It is highly significant that although none of the ancient Indian wooden elements have survived, Himalayan artists at the beginning of the Second Diffusion—maybe directly inspired also by the original Indian wooden architecture, and not only by the stone monuments—were reproducing and combining these patterns in actual wood, clay and bricks. Thus, these Himalayan architectural images could be much closer to the original wooden prototypes of India—or supposed to be the original ones—than the later Indian stone versions.[6]

Furthermore, it is interesting to observe the typology of the ramparts with towers, with the last floor projecting beyond the perimeter of the building which bears a resemblance to the actual towers in stone, bricks and wood scattered in Kinnaur and all over Himachal Pradesh. Instead, the merlons of the tower in the left upper corner recall our middle age architecture.

An important development is represented by a slab from Amarāvatī (now in the British Museum), where a standing Buddha appears cen-

[4] See Mitra 1984: 36. Note: All photographs are by the author and Massimiliano A. Polichetti, except: plate 3 which is by Claudio Cardelli; plates 4,5,6 which are by Antonio Sbrolli; and plate 14 which is by Marco Vasta (whom I wish to thank for help with photographic research).

[5] Also termed *caitya* arch, *gavākṣa, gomukha* or *kūḍu*, is a kind of double curved arch, called an ogee in European Gothic; see Harle 1986: 24, 48.

[6] See Mortari Vergara Caffarelli 1990.

tered on the surface of the *stūpa*.[7] Here the Buddha figure is surrounded by an elaborate architectural structure: a great step forwards indeed, if compared to the early, simpler depiction of architecture, mostly archways framing religious personages.[8] In the relief examined at Sāñcī the actual royal palaces of prince Siddhārtha before the Enlightenment were shown, while in the Amarāvatī slab instead one sees the *stūpa*, the "house" of the Buddha-mind. In other words, the comparison between the two reliefs can be read as the transition from the palaces of the secular life to the divine palace.

Also at Sāñcī the *stūpa* is widely represented among the carved decorations of the *toraṇa* but, probably due to aniconism, the Sāñcī *stūpa* lack the Buddha image.

In the Amarāvatī slab the composition, the architectural and decorative details, are carefully rendered according to the Āndhra style: a Buddha robed in heavy drapery with prominent folds stands on a platform (*vāhalkada*) surmounted by *āyaka* pillars. This type of representation suggests the idea of a door opening on the solid volume of the dome, in order to reveal its inner content.

To the same category—from a symbolic point of view—the *stūpa* housed in cave 19 and 26 at Ajaṇṭā can be attributed, even if belonging to a different art-historical context.[9] Compared to the Amarāvatī slab, in cave 19 the front of a very elongated *stūpa* opens in a widened *toraṇa* showing a large image of a standing Buddha, as if emerging from the stone core of the *stūpa* itself.

But the Amarāvatī slab and the Ajaṇṭā *stūpa* share a formal and philosophical development. In fact, both convey the same visual impact as divine houses of the Buddha-mind revealing their divine guest, who is also the owner of the house: the Buddha himself.

Therefore, at a deeper level of meaning, these artistic compositions are intended to emphasise the identity between the architecture of the

[7] Datable in the final decades of the Sātavāhana rule and the transition to the Ikṣvāku period, i.e. in the late 2nd, early 3rd century, see Huntington 1985: 177.

[8] However, in a noteworthy grey schist Gandhāran slab, dated in the 2nd–3rd century CE and exhibited at the National Museum of Oriental Art in Rome (inv. No 14847/19162), a cross-legged Bodhisattva is shown inside a frame composed by two columns with capitals of the Corinthian order supporting a triangular tympanum; this kind of frame, very similar to a stylised Greek temple, suggests (as a working hypothesis) that around the end of the 2nd century all over India the aesthetical trends converged towards a more detailed depiction of the architectural frames.

[9] Cave 19 and 26 have been carved in the late 5th century, during the Vakāṭaka period.

stūpa and the Buddha. Complex *stūpa* structures accomodating seated or standing Buddhas will appear with a certain frequency in the cave architecture of India. Owing to its tridimensionality, this kind of *stūpa* is fit to be elaborated like a stone maṇḍala, opening its *toraṇa* on the four cardinal points and revealing the appropriate *tathāgata*, in a series of diversified versions, particularly in the Pāla-Sena schools of sculpture and in the art of Nepal.

The niches which rise on the frontal terrace of the cave 10 (Viśvakarma) at Ellorā lead us to trace a typologically closer connection with Himalayan art (Plate 2). In fact, like in the Buddha palaces which embellish door frames and walls of Western Tibetan *lha khang*, every element conveys the image of the façade of a real temple, where the door has been removed and the observer is allowed to look inside, into the *garbhagṛha*. The treatment of the architectural details, from the embedded pillars surmounted by the *āmalaka* shaped capitals with projecting *vyāla* cum riders, to the pediment (*udgama*) composed by superimposed *gavākṣa* and *āmalaka* inset at the corner, remind us of the Nāgara typology, echoing a post-Gupta style.

In a similar way, along the concentric multiple frames of the wooden doorway at Ribba, Kinnaur (late 10th to early 11th c.), unfolds a sequence of Buddhas and Buddhist divinities, enclosed within architectural frames.[10] On the lintel, the divinities are carved inside stylised palaces, composed by trilobate arches supported by a double order of columns. The trilobate arches are generally surmounted by a stepped structure which can develop into three or more terraces, crowned in some cases by an *āmalaka*, recalling the Indian *śikhara* typology. Along the door jambs, a succession of niches housing standing Buddhas is carved. Above, the niches are concluded by trilobate arches defined within single or double triangular gable, thus suggesting a pair of superimposed sloping roofs, as in the actual architecture of Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh.

One of the unquestionable sources of the trilobate arch, inserted in trapezoidal and/or triangular gable motif, can be clearly identified within the art of Kashmir. At Mārtāṇḍ (second quarter of 8th century), for instance, this pattern has been exploited to the full, providing a decora-

[10] On the Ribba portal, see Luczanits 1996: 67–75, Di Mattia 2002: 102–106, Klimburg-Salter 2002: 8–11.

tive motif and used structurally across the entrance of the main temple.[11]

The wooden doorway of the A lci *'du khang*, in Ladakh (datable in the 11th–12th century, and seemingly painted and re-painted several times in the course of the centuries),[12] offers us the opportunity to distinguish analytically between elaborate *prabhāmaṇḍala*—that can suggest and could also be defined as architectural frames—and actual representation of architecture (Plate. 3).

Consequently, a differentiation has to be made among those images framed only by a *toraṇa*—usually consisting of mythological animals and swirling garland motifs, as in the sequence displayed on the *'du khang* lintel—and those depicted inside an architectural motif, like the succession aligned on the door jambs, where the sketchy structure of a palace surrounds the divinity.

Both these typologies recur in the interior of the early temples of Western Himalaya, characterising their Indo-Tibetan style.

---

[11] The diffusion of the trilobate arch in Indian Himalaya is outlined in Khosla 1979: 26f, 34f, 57, 73. See also Di Mattia 1996:100; 2002:105.

[12] There is a general agreement among the scholars in considering the *'du khang* as the earliest temple of A lci. In the first comprehensive works on A lci, the *'du khang* has been dated in the 11th century and the whole complex between the 11th and the 12th, except the *lha khang so ma*, dated in the 13th (Snellgrove and Skorupski 1979: 30–31, 79); Khosla wrote that the temples are attributed to Rin chen bzang po (1979: 31). For Pal, the *'du khang* is datable in the 11th century (1982: 33, 1989: 121) and Mortari Vergara too attributes the foundation of A lci towards the end of the 11th century (1987: 270). According to Goepper "(...) the wall-paintings (...) together with their buildings were executed in several phases between the late eleventh or early twelfth century (Dukhang), the late twelfth or even early thirteenth century (Sumtsek and 'Great Stupa'), and later in the thirteenth century (Lhakhang Soma)" (in Pal 1996: 84). Luczanits wrote that all the buildings are attributable to the same period "(...) dating from approximately the middle of the 12th century to the early 13th century" (2004: 127). However, it is here fair to specify that the studies on A lci are mainly concerned with paintings and sculptures, except for Khosla and Mortari Vergara who examined architecture. From a stylistic point of view, the portal of the *'du khang* at A lci can be conveniently attributed to the beginning of the Second Diffusion of Buddhism, since carved wooden doors, with concentric multiple frames, recur and characterise many of the temples dated between the 10th and the 12th century as, for instance, Khojarnath, Ribba, Gung rang, Ta pho ('Brom ston and Byams pa *lha khang*), Nako (*dkar byung lha khang*). Other features are typical of the Indo-Tibetan artistic language as well, like the triangular pointed crowns worn by the divinities carved on the door frames at A lci (for a short note on the Indian prototypes of the pointed crowns see Di Mattia 1998: 213–14, 2002: 108), and the knees of the divinities projecting beyond the circumferences of the lotus thrones, clearly recalling the influence of the Kashmiri schools of sculpture of the 10th–11th century (a few statues belonging to this typology have been mentioned in Di Mattia 2003: 151). Therefore, it seems reasonable to date the architecture of the *'du khang* at A lci between the 11th and the 12th centuries.

Among the variety of designs carved on the jambs of the *'du khang* portal, we will have a closer look at three panels, in order to briefly analyse the architectural shapes chosen by the Himalayan sculptors at A lci. On the left jamb, presumably the light offering Goddess (Dīpaṃ) appears framed by a pair of fluted columns (Plate 4). The columns support a tympanum composed by a cuspidal element in the centre and two smaller on the sides (the one on the left is missing), a variation on the theme of the trilobate arch, whereas each lobe has a triangular shape. The capitals are composed of a flared echinus surmounted by an abacus, like in the Doric order, topped by triangular elements. The roof of the building is marked by what, at first glance, seems to be a bigger ogival arch in the centre and two smaller replicas in the corners; but actually on the left side is discernible an elongated *stūpa* with long fluttering streamers, and, at the centre, a probable *dharma* wheel rests on an *āmalaka*, crowned by a pinnacle recalling the *stūpika*, i.e. the vase-shaped finial on the top of the superstructure of a south Indian style temple.

Our next palace, located just above the Dīpaṃ's one, is inhabited by the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī with four arms, whose attributes are the sword, the Prajñāpāramitā text and the bow (Plate 5). Mañjuśrī is enclosed in what we can define as a classical Kashmiri façade: two fluted columns, with capitals recalling the Doric order—a typology widespread in ancient Kashmiri art—supporting a pediment articulated in a trilobate arch surmounted by a gable roof.

Possibly the image carved inside the upper palace of the *'du khang* left doorjamb could be the Goddess Mālā (Plate 6). Here a stepped, squarish arch which can be defined as another variation on the theme of the trilobate arch and which presumably reflects contemporary structural architecture, is framed by a triangular gable. The vertex of the gable, as well as the centre of the stepped arch, is marked by a pinnacle recalling the shape of a *stūpika*. The whole chapel suggests the picture of a portion of real architecture.

In this context, it is interesting to compare with the wooden carvings of the tympanum at Ribba, due to the considerable amount of Indian architectural elements displayed there.[13]

The *gser khang* at Lha lung (Spiti) has some beautiful sculptured Buddha palaces projecting from the walls: once not confined to the

---

[13] See Di Mattia 2002:100–102.

decoration of door frames, the representation of architecture seems to evolve in complex and detailed design.[14]

According to Shuttleworth, Tucci and Khosla, the temple was founded around the 11th century or "the times of Rin chen bzang po"; according to Klimburg-Salter, Lha lung is datable to the end of the 12th.

A local source, *bla ma* Bstan 'dzin, the resident *bla ma* at Lha lung, told us the following story.[15] The *gser khang* was founded 1008 years ago (i.e. 996 CE) by Rin chen bzang po in only one night, together with Ta pho.[16] According to *bla ma* Bstan 'dzin, the royal groups painted on the lower register in the right side wall of the *gser khang* represent Byang chub 'od and his *mahārānī*. The Maitreya and Padmasambhava statues were made five hundred years ago, when Chos rje *rin po che* restored the temple. Chos rje (probably a title, used by *bla ma* Bstan 'dzin as a proper name)[17] *rin po che* was original of Chumur in Mnga' ris Stod.[18] Then, in the course of the years, the *rin po che*'s descendants, successors and disciples used to come often from Tibet to Lha lung in order to take care of the temple. Chos rje *rin po che* took a special interest in the golden paintings and, whenever needed, he ensured that the gilding was restored. In any case, the gilded statues never underwent major damage. His successors carried on the same task over the centuries untill the *rin po che* of DKyil monastery observed that they were spoiling the originals and consenquently asked for the interruption of the gilding work.

Then, the *bla ma* Bstan 'dzin's story runs as follows: when the *lo tsā ba* Rin chen bzang po came to Lha lung, he brought a stick of seasoned wood. Then, after meditation and prayers, he declared: "I'll plant here

---

[14] Lha lung has been studied by Shuttleworth 1929, then by Tucci 1935: 116–21, by Khosla 1979: 48–53, Klimburg-Salter 1994: 39–46 and Luczanits 2004: 89–106.

[15] Personal oral communcation collected in the summer 1999, during the fieldwork carried out with Massimiliano A. Polichetti in the framework of a joint Research Project between the Chair of History of Oriental Asian Art of the Genoa State University and the National Museum of Oriental Art in Rome. The explanation and the narrative sequence was made by *bla ma* Bstan 'dzin.

[16] Sounding like one of the peculiar legend connected with the Rin chen bzang po *rnam thar*.

[17] For the use of the title *chos rje* see for instance the case of Rgyal mtshan Dpal bzang po (1310–1391), the founder of the 'Ba' ra Bka' brgyud pa school, generally known as Chos rje 'Ba' ra ba (Ardussi 2002: 5–22) and that of 'Bri gung Rin chen dpal, 'Jig rten gsum mgon (1143–1217), the founder of the 'Bri gung Bka' brgyud pa school, also referred to by the title Chos rje (Klimburg-Salter 2004: 48–53).

[18] Today in the so-called Tibetan Autonomous Region.

this stick: if this stick will put down roots and put forth leaves, that will be a good auspice for a temple". Afterwards, two years later, when the *lo tsā ba* returned to inspect the stick, the leaves sprang up and began to grow. Thus, he built the temple, and the tree which nowadays stands in the very middle of the pond is the same tree planted by Rin chen bzang po, so the tree is two years older than the temple.[19] In 1962, after the Indo-Chinese war, the successors of Chos rje *rin po che* stopped their journeys to Lha lung. Fifteen years ago the Dkyil *rin po che* demanded to definitively interrupt retouching the paintings. Therefore, at present the art works are not even dusted, because local keepers are afraid to spoil them. The whole structure, including the statues jutting from the walls, belongs to the same period, i.e. 1008 years ago. The Dkyil *rin po che* is Lo chen sprul sku, Rin chen bzang po, who is a reincarnation of Śākyamuni Buddha.[20] Lo chen sprul sku is considered the 19th reincarnation of Rin chen bzang po, and was born at Shalkhar, in Kinnaur. When the reincarnations of this lineage visit the temple, they shut the door behind their backs and, once completely alone, they talk with the Śākyamuni image located in the temple. This happens when the reincarnations of the *lo tsā ba* Rin chen bzang po visit the temple for the first time, and they are approximately only three or four years old.

In the *gser khang*, from the left side of the back wall, the palace of Mañjuśrī Vāgīśvara[21] juts out (Plate 7). The composition shares the fea-

---

19 In the light of this legend, see Klimburg-Salter's comment (1994: 40): "In front of the entrance to the chapel is a sacred pond with an enormous willow tree which appears, from its extraordinary dimensions, to be many hundred years old. That the pond and the tree are sacred can be seen from the fact that the *skor lam* which allows the sacred circumambulation goes around not only the chapel but also the tree and pond".

20 These are still the words of *bla ma* Bstan 'dzin's narration; at least in one of the Rin chen bzang po *rnam thar* is found exactly the same statement: "Such a great man as this is an incarnation of the Buddha Śākyamuni [...]" (Snellgrove and Skorupski 1980: 98).

21 At first glance, this image seems identifiable as Avalokiteśvara Padmapāṇi, as Luczanits in fact does (2004: 98). Also Francke, in a footnote on the Shuttleworth study, tentatively identifies this statue as Padmapāṇi, putting the question in a dubitative form (1929: 5). Differently Tucci, quoting the Sādhanamālā, relates a description of Mañjuśrī Vāgiśvara in which the body posture, the placement of the lotus flower, besides the colour, fits almost certainly for our deity (1935: 119). Khosla follows the Tucci's identification (1979: 51). It seems quite inconsistent to write "Tucci's identification is based on the body colour, which is not relevant, as the sculptures had been repainted shortly before Tucci's visit. It is also possible that Tucci had confused this image with the left-hand Bodhisattva immediately below him whose hand gestures

ture of having a couple of dwarfish figures laterally placed with the central image of the main temple of Sani.[22] The two figures hold their arms above their heads in the manner of Atlantis, appearing to uphold two lower semi-architraves on either side of the main vault. The images at Lha lung are slender, their bodies are twisted in an accented *tribhaṅga*, but display a vigorous muscular postures.

The façade of the building has a typology called *serliana* in Italian language, which means that it opens in three spans: the central one is arched whereas the side spans are architraved.[23] The Mañjuśrī image is framed by a five-lobed arch, part of an architectural setting that combines features of the temple and the mountain. The whole palace typology, slighty pyramidal, is classifiable as *bhūmiprāsāda*, and the progressively smaller storeys, demarcated by *kapota*,[24] are scanned by little square pavilions indicated by pinnacles increasing their size towards the summit. The larger central dome, at the apex of the structure—just above the head of Mañjuśrī—corresponds to the architectural barycentre of the palace, the core of the structure, and is surmounted by an *āmalaka* topped by a *chattrāvalli*. As if emerging from the last floor roofing, two roaring leogryphs face each other, divided only by the central dome. All the horizontal mouldings are adorned by rows of pendants (*opalī*). It will be noted that the plan and the skyline suggest the idea of the *axis mundi* surrounded by concentric rings, just as the Mount Meru of Indian cosmology is imagined to be girdled by successive decreasing mountain ramparts, the *cakravala*.

Also the palace housing Vajrasattva, on the right side of the back wall, opens in the three spans of the *serliana* typology, showing similar proportions with the Mañjuśrī palace (Plate 8). The whole building is also classifiable as *bhūmiprāsāda*, with gradually decreasing terraces

---

would suggest identification as Mañjuśrī" (Luczanits 2004: 312), because, just in the same page above quoted, Tucci observed "Of the four statues which compose his *parivāra*, or followers, the second to the right probably represents Mañjuśrī Arapacana: in the right hand he should hold the sword and in the left hand he should carry the book of *prajñā*".

[22] At Sani (Zangskar), the central image is a crowned Śākyamuni. On Sani, see Khosla 1979: 95, 97–99, Snellgrove and Skorupski 1980: in particular 28, 38, 41.

[23] Serliana is a particular three mullioned window, analysed by the 15th century Italian architect Sebastiano Serlio in his *Trattato di Architettura*. I wish to thank Giacomella Orofino for suggesting this footnote.

[24] " (...) the *kapota* is the most ubiquitous of all Indian temple architectural motifs (...) Approximating a quarter-circle in section, it is used as an eaves or cornice or as one of the moulding of the base" (Harle 1986: 501).

towards the summit. Each storey (*bhūmi* or *tala*) is demarcated by *kapota* from which an unbroken row of *opalī* hangs. Small square pavilions rise at the corners, emphasised by pinnacles constituted by blazing jewels, while the central pinnacle on the top of the palace has two superimposed *āmalaka*, crowned by a *kalaśa*. The palace is marked by vertical rows of *vajra* carved in bas-relief along the columns. The main differences with the Mañjuśrī palace are recognisable in the squarish shapes of the volumes and in the presence of *vyāla* on the sides, replacing the dwarfish figures and recalling the Pāla-Sena style of the Buddha thrones.

The architecture of the Prajñāpāramitā palace, on the right hand wall of the *gser khang*, is more simple. It opens with a large trilobate arch around which is developed a three tiered structure (Plate 9). The upper part corresponds to the curved vault of the main roof and the lower semi-arches cover two aisles on either side of the main vault. The side columns supporting the whole structure seem dressed, wrapped in a red coloured cloth, fastened by metal rings (*ka shan*) and rhomboidal knobs. The capitals are composed by an *āmalaka* surmounted by a scroll of acanthus leaves, recalling the Corinthian order. Small domed pavilions lead to the bigger and higher domed niche or "the celestial pavilion (*vimāna*)"[25] where Amitābha resides.

Regarding the mural paintings at the Lha lung *gser khang* we have a short but significant description written by Shuttleworth, who saw the temple on 18th August 1924. The restoration of the paintings would have occured between 1924 and 1933, because at the time of Tucci's visit they were in its present condition and, as observed by Klimburg-Salter: " (...) the present paint has been faithfully copied over the original".[26] According to Shuttleworth: "There are many faint paintings in medallions on this wall to either side and below the figures. Two large Buddhas within circles are visible, also various Indian palace scene".[27]

Today, due to the repainting, the colour are rather vivid, but it is very possible to recognise the themes described by Shuttleworth. In fact on the left side of the right hand wall is painted a 'Buddha within a circle' inside a multistoreyed palace. In the lower register royal courtiers and divinities inside palaces are painted. The two palaces below the

[25] Tucci 1935: 120.
[26] Klimburg-Salter 1994: 44.
[27] Shuttleworth 1929: 6.

Prajñāpāramitā sculpture seem to express the interchangeability of volumes and typologies (Plate 10). The left palace, enclosing Mañjuśrī, shows an angular outline beneath a triangular gable, while the right one is surmounted by a rounded ogival arch. But the side pavilions in the left panel, which seem suspended in the sky, have dome shaped roofs; in the right panel instead we find the side pavilions with flat roofs, like in the real Tibetan architecture, crowned by blazing jewel finials.

Also the *Lo tsā ba lha khang* of Nako in high Kinnaur (datable between the 11th and the 12th century) is decorated with illustrations of architecture: a sequence of divinities inside three storeyed palaces is depicted along the lower register of the back wall.[28] Even if the paintings are rather worn, nevertheless a number of beautifully rendered details are still discernible (Plates 11–12).

Columns of composite order, with triangular tops, support the superstructure dividing one scene from the next. Capitals with side volutes surmounted by a flaring lotus flower corolla join together the shaft of the columns and the triangular tops. The triangular tops are bordered with little stylised flames which seemingly represent braziers. Each level has sloping roofs of decreasing size, like in the architecture of Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh. The roofs are covered with coloured tiles, often including the dormer-window or sky-light. Architectural elements such as mouldings, parapets, balconies (bordered with lotus petals) and the whole structure are treated with a wealth of ornamentation, expressing the idea of sumptuous, divine palaces where the Buddhas reside in all their majesty.

A veritable storehouse of Indian decorative motifs, the visual impact of these palaces is somewhat reminiscent of Xuan Zang's description of Nālandā: "(...) richly adorned towers (...) precious terraces spread like stars (...) the beams were painted with all colours of the rainbow and were carved and ornamented, while the pillars were red and green (...) the rafters adorned with paintings (...) the coloured eaves, the richly adorned balaustrades, and the roofs covered with tiles that reflect the light in a thousand shades".[29] Of course Nako paintings can be considered only a purely fanciful reconstruction of the ruined, lost Nālandā elevation. It is impossible to ascertain whether the unknown painters of

[28] Nako has been studied by Francke 1914: 32–34; Tucci 1935: 141–73; Di Mattia 1998, 2003; Klimburg-Salter 2003 and Luczanits 2003, 2004: 77–88.

[29] Mainly quoted from Khosla 1979: 14; on Xuan Zang, see Beal 1969.

Nako ever saw Nālandā, heard about Nālandā or, above all, how Nālandā palaces appeared one thousand years ago.

Nevertheless, even if the forms are embellished by the artist's imagination, all these shrines were mainly inspired by genuine Indian architecture. We have just seen a series of different adaptation of the architectural styles of ancient Bihar and Bengal (in particular of the Pāla-Sena period), enriched with elements belonging to the artistic language of Buddhist caves in Deccan (for instance the employment of *āmalaka* and *gavākṣa*) often perhaps re-interpreted by Kashmiri and north-western Indian schools, and recombined due to the taste and choices of the Himalayan artists. In fact, all these typologies can be traced to the stepped, truncated pyramids of Buddhist monuments in north-eastern India, among which the most quoted in Tibetan literary sources is the Odaṇṭapuri *mahāvihāra*.

Thus it appears that we are observing a sculptured and painted archive of the living architecture of those times, seeing the transmission to posterity of the styles of Indian Buddhist architecture in its mature phase, in order to document the structural landscape of Tibetan holy land, the pilgrimage sites of the land of the Buddha. Indeed, referring to Ta pho the Dalai Lama recently stated: "These works of art delightfully express the vigour of the transmission of Buddhism from India to Tibet and the dynamic mingling of cultures".[30]

Regarding the recurrent *opalī* ornamentation it is interesting to observe how elongated pendants still persist in sub-Himalayan wooden temples architecture, like for instance at Nirmaṇḍ (Sutlej valley) (Plate 13). When moved by the wind, the *opalī* transform the palace into a singing architecture. However, the *opalī* may also suggest a stalactite curtain, allowing us to speculate on the temple conceived as an architectural replica of the world structure, with the entrances opening like caves in a magic mountain.

Himalayan artists always represent the outer surface of the palace, opened with a cross-section in order to show the inner cella, the *garbhagṛa*. Consequently, the divinity appears perfectly centred on the vertical axis of the whole building which, owing to its three diminishing tiers, can be considered as a veritable *gsum brtsegs*.

The vertical axis, enhanced by the skylight rising like a turret on the summit of the temple, symbolises the union of the earth and the sky.

[30] *The Times of India*, March 16th 2003.

Therefore, the dwelling of the divinity is at the core of the cosmic mountain, in the luminous centre of these architectural maṇḍala.

The present study reveals the considerable importance attached to architecture by Tibetans. In Tibetan literature there are a few consistent metaphors based on architectural elements. For example, in the Rin chen bzang po *rnam thar* the group of the main disciples is referred as 'the four pillars and the eight beams'; Dpal ye shes, the author of the *rnam thar*, was the third of the four pillars.[31] Therefore, the main disciples were paralleled to the carrying structure of the dharma house.

In the *Shing gi bstan bcos*[32] (the Commentary of the Wood) it is stated: "How in order to obtain good dwellings it is necessary to join together columns, beams and planks, in the same way by heaping up the Three Superior Trainings the Excellent Liberation Dwelling will result".

Often the building exterior has been neglected, in comparison with the attention deserved to the magnificent painted and sculptured masterpieces surviving inside. This is also due to the fact that the exterior has been more subject to decay due to continuous exposure to the environmental factors and, consequently, more subject to alterations and restorations. The temples, the masonry boxes, were and are isles of protection, salvation, purification and refuge in the ocean of *saṃsāra*, colourful isles of light, lamps in the path of existence. Furthermore the 'temple' is the space for 'contemplation'. The architecture is the body and the divinity the soul, pervading and influencing the structural shapes. In the words of Pratapaditya Pal: "(...) the shrines are being homologised with the deity, the embodiment of compassion who always gazes on all sides".[33]

All the temples are (in an inner sense) maṇḍalas, but the Nako paintings or the Lha lung sculptures are more veritable maṇḍala due to their consistent architectural shapes.

The tradition of representing architecture still survives in the Western Himalayan context, as for instance is demonstrated by a couple of beautiful contemporary paintings of heavenly palaces at Lamayuru (Ladakh) and at Kardang (Lahul) (Plates 14–15).

[31] See Snellgrove and Skorupski 1980: 97.

[32] Legs par bshad pa shing gi bstan bcos lugs gnyis yal 'dab brgya ldan, in "Collected Works of Gung thang dKon mchog bstan pa'i sgron me (1762–1823)", catalogued by De Rossi Filibeck 1994: 289, 304.

[33] Pal 1982: 54.

Examining a mural painting located in the Byams pa'i *lha khang* at Ta pho (Spiti), it is possible to infer that Tibetans inherited from India not only art styles, but also the art of perspective (Plate. 16). The ancient Indian sculptors and painters did not care to reproduce the world with photographic realism or with a single perspective. The landscape and architecture are simultaneously seen and rendered from multiple lookout-points: frontal, from above, in cross/vertical section, three-quarters, inside/outside, since the artist does not limit himself to depict what he could see only through physical eyes, but he investigates using a mental vision. Space is relative: the artist communicates not through an objective vision, rather through subjective perception.

In the Byams pa'i *lha khang* painting the truncated stepped pyramid skyline is obtained by diminishing the number of the buildings towards the summit. The black lines of the flat roofs, the reddish frieze at the top (*spen ma* or *spen chung*), the rows of windows (small and red) contrasting on the white walls, and the clear outlines contribute to the balance of horizontal and vertical volumes.

Concluding remarks

The Second Diffusion of Buddhism (*bstan pa phyi dar*) which, similarly to the First one (*bstan pa snga dar*), was primarly based on the research of the Indian philosophic sources, involved also the penetration of the artistic and architectural schools of the Indian Buddhist cultural world.

Handa used a term which fits well in order to define the main stylistic influences upon the Western Tibetan artistic production: *rgya gar gyi khang*, literally 'the house of India', but translatable as 'architecture of Indian style' (1994: 80). In fact, the temples and monasteries built during this period bear evidence of Indian characters in the plans, in the overall shapes and in the decorative and structural elements.

The more ancient prototypes of portals surrounded by carved concentric multiple frames are in fact traceable in the Indian architecture of the Gupta, Vakāṭaka and post-Gupta periods, as, for instance, at the entrance of the Buddha niche in cave 2 at Ajaṇṭā (late 5th century), or in the stone temples of Deogarh and Nāchnā Kuṭharā (beginning of 6th century).

From Central India, this pattern most likely travelled to the hill area bordering the Western Himalayan kingdoms, where it was employed in several temples datable from the 8th century onwards. In today Himachal Pradesh the typology of the concentric multiple framed doors is indeed observable in a group of ancient sites scattered all over the region, as for instance at Lakṣaṇā Devī (Bharmaur), Śakti Devī (Chatrāṛhi), Dakhanī Mahādeva (Nirmaṇḍ), Markulādevī (Udaipur), all in carved wood and datable between the 8th and the 11th centuries, while at Gaurī Śaṅkara (Jagatsukh) and Viśveśvara (Bajaura), datable between the 8th and the 10th centuries, the doors frames are in stone.

Therefore, we can formulate the hypothesis that in the case of the multiple framed doors the pattern was firstly absorbed, then mediated, elaborated and finally 'exported' to the Mnga' ris by the trans-Himalayan regions known as Himachal Pradesh, and not from the proper Kashmiri areas, towards which Western Tibetan art is nevertheless deeply indebted.

The transfer and the diffusion of this pattern were indeed succesful, judging by the beautiful specimens which adorn the entrance at the *Lo tsā ba lha khang* of Khojarnath, the 'Brom ston *lha khang* (chung) and Byams pa *lha khang* of Ta pho, the *Lo tsā ba lha khang* of Ribba, the *lha khang* of Gung rang, the *dkar byung lha khang* of Nako, the *'du khang* of A lci and the *Lo tsā ba lha khang* of Spu.

Regarding the architectural typologies carved on the doors frames, the stylistic sources were, in a broad sense, the temple's shapes of Northern India and Kashmiri areas.

Presumably, around the 10th–11th centuries, companies of itinerant artists were travelling from a monastery to another along the sacred circuits of the Gu ge Pu hrang kingdoms religious establishments.[34] The flow and the contribution of these groups of artists should have depended on two main factors: the wealth, or the economic resources of the monasteries, and the weather, since during the severe Himalayan win-

[34] Regarding the activity of Indian artists in Mnga' ris, a mention is traceable in the Rin chen bzang po rnam thar; see Tucci 1933: 66–67, Snellgrove and Skorupski 1980: 92. According to Petech, Rin chen bzang po returned from Kashmir after 1003, together with the thirty-two Kashmiri artists (in Klimburg-Salter 1994: 35). Instead, according to Handa the second journey of the Lo tsā ba lasted from 999 up to 1005 (1994: 70) and "Necessarily all the artists might not have been from Kashmir, but also from the neighbouring country, *viz.*, Chamba, Kullu etc. where the art of image-making, in what is known as Kashmiri style, had become very developed by that period" (1994: 86).

ters moving across the high mountain passes of Mnga' ris skor gsum has been always very hard.

Thereafter, local workshops gradually sprang out, under the guidance of Indian *śilpin*, giving rise to a sort of artistic renaissance which was going to pervade, with sumptuous paintings and richly elaborate sculptures, the architecture of the Second Diffusion.

Interaction among Indian masters and local skilled workmen was undoubtedly fostered by the growing number of the *lo tsā ba* descending towards the Indian hillsides and plains in search of Buddhist textual sources and *paṇḍita*, the scholars able to disclose the essence of the scripts, their inner and hidden meaning.

Also the many *lo tsā ba* must have taken part in the whole artistic process, since Rin chen bzang po himself is credited with the foundation of onehundred and eight temples; even today, in Tibetan traditional contexts, monks and *bla ma*—side by side with laymen—paint, carve and plan the lay-out of the monasteries.

Therefore, the formative role played by the Indian itinerant artists, summed up with the local building traditions and the experience gained by the Himalayan intellectuals in consequence of their pilgrimages to the Buddhist sites of India, led to the formulation of a peculiar Indo-Tibetan stylistic school, whose fruits unmistakably mark the Mnga' ris territories.[35]

In the sculptured and painted palaces examined here, specific Indian elements are selected and reassembled to form a new context, structured by Tibetan creativity and aesthetic sensitivity.

The trilobate arch, a decorative and structural motif widely employed in ancient Kashmiri temples, interacts with the *āmalaka* which adorn the capitals of the Deccani cave temples, and scans the diminishing tiers of Indian *śikhara* as well. In the same way, under the *kapota* moulding often a fringe of *opalī*, a sort of pendant which recurrently embellishes the trans-Himalayan architecture, hangs. And, again, it is possible to observe the *caitya* window, typical of the Indian Buddhist rock-cut architecture, which opens beneath superimposed sloping roofs of decreasing size, similar to the slate covering of the Himachali buildings, in a exquisitely harmonious blend of styles and typologies converging to the composition of an organic whole.

---

[35] For the main characteristic features of the Indo-Tibetan style in Western Himalaya see Di Mattia (2002: 95).

One of the meeting point between the philosophic and aesthetic thought of the Indian and Tibetan worlds is the heavenly abode of Buddhist, Hindu, Jain and Bon Gods, symbolised on earth by mount Kailāsa. The key architectural concept is here the representation of a tridimensional maṇḍala, readable in the mountain shaped *mahāvihāra* of the Pāla-Sena period (8th–12th centuries) as Odaṇṭapurī at Bihār Sharīf, Vīkramaśila at Antichak, Somapura at Pahāṛpur and Salban at Maināmatī. The total effect produced by the stepped profiles of these imposing truncated pyramids has been reinterpreted by the Tibetan artists in their architectural, sculptured or painted *gsum brtsegs*. Here we confront the representation of monumental sacred architecture, the culmination of the long artistic journey from the *prabhāmaṇḍala* to the palace, as expressed by the Himalayan architectural frames.

Bibliography

Ardussi, J. 2002. Observations on the political organisation of western Bhutan in the 14th century, as revealed in records of the 'Ba' ra ba sect. *In* J. Ardussi & H. Blezer (eds) *Impressions of Bhutan and Tibetan Art—Tibetan Studies III (Proceedings of the IX Seminar of the IATS)*. Leiden: Brill's Tibetan Studies Library, 5–22.

Beal, S. 1969 (1884). *Buddhist Records of the Western World.* Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporations.

Callieri, P. and A. Filigenzi (eds) 2002. *Il Maestro di Saidu Sharif—Alle origini dell'arte del Gandhara*. Roma: Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale.

De Rossi Flibeck, E. 1994. *Catalogue of the Tucci Tibetan Fund in the Library of IsMEO, Vol. I*, Rome: IsMEO.

Di Mattia, M. 1996. A historical profile of Ladakhi religious architecture. *In* M.A. Polichetti (ed.) *Shaping the Mind—Artistic Facets of Tibetan Civilization, special issue on art of The Tibet Journal, a publication for the study of Tibet*, vol. XXI(2), 90–127.

—— 1998. Il complesso templare di Nako nell'alto Kinnaur—Un esempio dello stile indo-tibetano dei secoli X–XII. *In Rivista degli Studi Orientali*, vol. LXXI(1–4, 1997), 185–238.

—— 2002. Indo-Tibetan schools of art and architecture in the western Himalaya—the instance of Ribba in Kinnaur. *In* J. Ardussi & H. Blezer (eds) *Impressions of Bhutan and Tibetan Art—Tibetan Studies III (Proceedings of the IX Seminar of the IATS)*, Leiden: Brill's Tibetan Studies Library, 91–112.

—— 2003. Il complesso templare di Nako nell'alto Kinnaur—Un esempio dello stile indo-tibetano dei secoli X–XII—Parte II. *In Rivista degli Studi Orientali*, vol. LXXVI(1–4, 2002), 137–67.

Francke, A.H. 1914–26. *Antiquities of Indian Tibet,* 2 vols.. Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing—India.

Goepper, R. and J. Poncar 1996. *Alci—Il santuario buddhista nascosto del Ladakh—Il Sumtsek*. Milano: Adelphi Edizioni.

van Ham, P. and A. Stirn 1997. *The Forgotten Gods of Tibet. Early Buddhist Art in the Western Himalayas.* Paris: Éditions Mengès.
Handa, O.C. 1994. *Tabo Monastery and Buddhism in the Trans-Himalaya.* New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company.
Harle, J.C. 1986. *The Art and the Architecture of the Indian Subcontinent.* London: Penguin Books.
Huntington, S.L. 1985. *The Art of Ancient India*. New York/Tokyo: Weatherhill.
Khosla, R. 1979. *Buddhist Monasteries in Western Himalaya*. Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar.
Klimburg-Salter, D. 1994. Tucci Himalayan archives report, 2—the 1991 expedition to Himachal Pradesh. *In East & West*, 44(1), 13–82.
—— 1997. *Tabo—A Lamp for the Kingdom. Early Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Art in the Western Himalaya*. Milano: Skira.
—— 2002. Ribba, the story of an early Buddhist temple in Kinnaur. *In* D. Klimburg-Salter & E. Allinger (eds) *Buddhist Art and Tibetan Patronage—Tibetan Studies (Proceedings of the IX Seminar of the IATS*). Leiden: Brill's Tibetan Studies Library, 1–26.
—— 2003. The Nako preservation project. *In Orientations* 34(5), 39–45.
—— 2004. Lama, yidam, protectors. *In Orientations* 35(3), 48–53.
Luczanits, Ch. 1996. Early Buddhist wood carvings from Himachal Pradesh. *Orientations* 27(6), 67–75.
—— 2003. The 12th Century Buddhist monuments of Nako. *Orientations* 34(5), 46–53.
—— 2004. *Buddhist Sculpture in Clay*. Chicago: Serindia Publications.
Mitra, D. 1984 [1957]. *Sanchi*. New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India.
Mortari Vergara Caffarelli, P. and G. Béguin (eds) 1987. *Dimore Umane, Santuari Divini—Origini, sviluppo e diffusione dell'architettura tibetana.* Roma-Parigi: Università degli studi 'La Sapienza' di Roma.
—— 1990. Alcune strutture architettoniche lignee dell'India antica e medievale documentate dall'architettura tibetana. *In Atti del Convegno internazionale di Udine – Luigi Pio Tessitori (1987)*. Brescia, 219–31.
Pal, P. 1989. Kashmir and the Tibetan connection. *In Art and Architecture of Ancient Kashmir*. Bombay: Marg Publications, 117–35.
—— (ed.) 1996. *On the Path to Void—Buddhist Art of the Tibetan Realm,* Mumbai: Marg Publications.
Pal, P. and Fournier, L. 1982. *A Buddhist Paradise—The Murals of Alchi, Western Himalayas*. Hong Kong: Visual Dharma Publications.
Shuttleworth, H.L. 1929. *Lha-lun Temple, Spyi-ti (with a preface by A.H. Francke).* Calcutta: Government of India Central Publication Branch.
Snellgrove, D. and T. Skorupski 1977. *The Cultural Heritage of Ladakh I—Central Ladakh*. Warminster: Aris & Phillips.
—— 1980. *The Cultural Heritage of Ladakh II—Zangskar and the Cave Temples of Ladakh*. Warminster: Aris & Phillips.
Tucci, G. 1988 (1935). *Indo-Tibetica III—The Temples of Western Tibet and their Artistic Symbolism—The Monasteries of Spiti and Kunavar.* New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan.

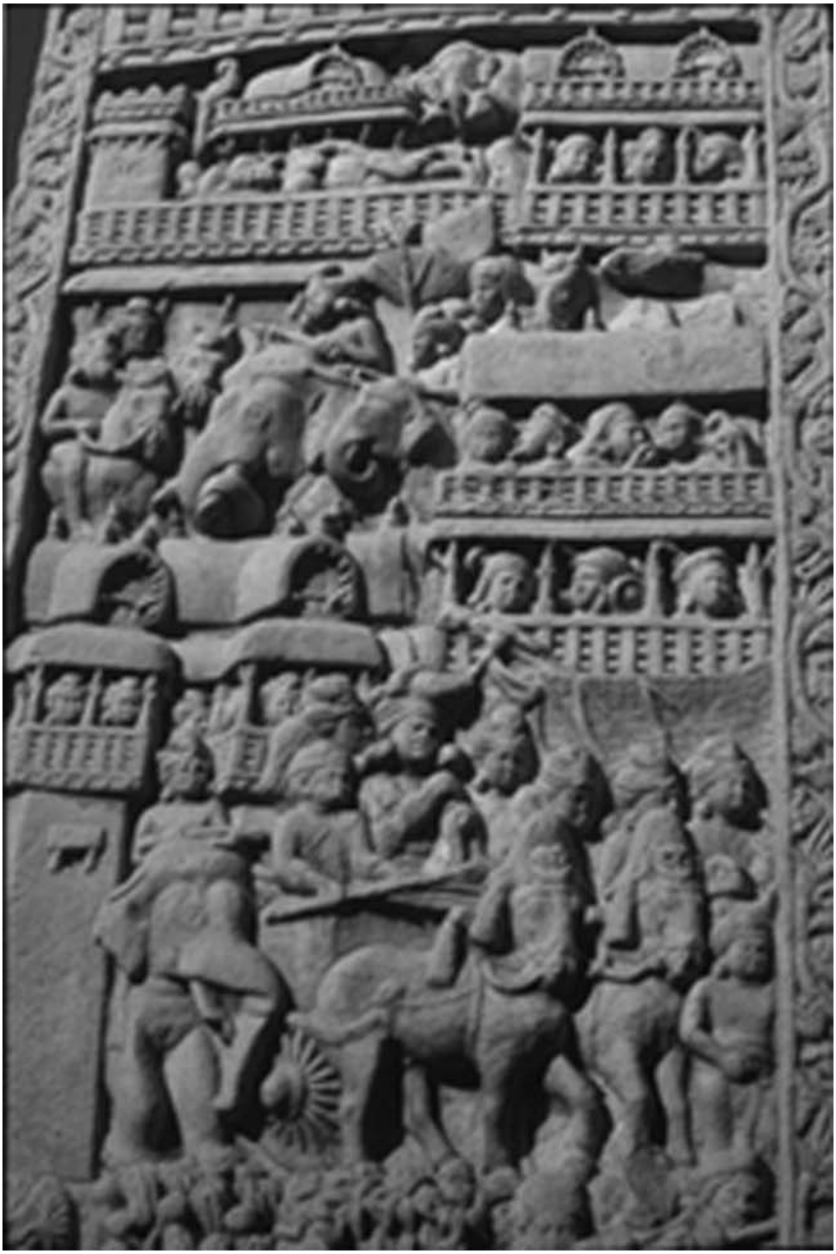


Plate 1: Sāñcī, east *toraṇa*, north pillar: the palaces of Kapilavastu



Plate. 2: Ellorā, Viśvakarma cave: the right side niche on the frontal terrace



Plate 3: A lci, the concentric multiple frames of the *'du khang* wooden doorway



Plate 5: A lci, the ’du khang doorway: carved panel on the left side jamb (Mañjuśrī chaturbhuja)



Plate 4: A lci, the *’du khang* doorway: carved panel on the left side jamb (Dīpaṃ offering goddess)



Plate 6: A lci, the *'du khang* doorway: carved panel on the left side jamb (Mālā offering goddess)



Plate 7: Lha lung, *gser khang*: the Mañjuśrī palace



Plate 8: Lha lung, *gser khang*: the Vajrasattva palace



Plate 9: Lha lung, *gser khang*: the Prajñāpāramitā palace



Plate 10: Lha lung, *gser khang*: mural paintings on the lower register



Plate 11: Nako, *lo tsā ba lha khang*: Buddha palaces painted on the lower register



Plate 12: Nako, *lo tsā ba lha khang*: Buddha palaces painted on the lower register



Plate 13: Nirmaṇḍ, wooden loggia with *opalī*



Plate 14: Lamayuru, contemporary mural painting of architecture



Plate 15: Kardang, contemporary mural painting of architecture



Plate 16: Ta pho, Byams pa'i lha khang: mural painting of Dga' ldan monastery

Part Two: Literature

FROM ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERY TO TEXT ANALYSIS: THE KHOR CHAGS MONASTERY FINDINGS AND THE *MAÑJUŚRĪNĀMASAṂGĪTI* FRAGMENT

GIACOMELLA OROFINO
(UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI NAPOLI 'L'ORIENTALE')

Unexpected chance discoveries rather than planned investigation have often provided crucial evidence resulting in considerable progress in historical research. In the context of the study of Western Tibetan temples and the significance of documentary material to be found in the libraries of the area—an important territory for the study of the Tibetan canon, not to mention art and architecture—a noteworthy find was made in 2000 thanks to the restoration of the temples of the Khor chags monastery in the Pu hrang county, on the border between the present-day Tibet Autonomous Region and India and Nepal. Here I will give an account of this discovery and also examine one text in detail to illustrate the kind of evidence it provides both for establishing the period to which the books belong to and also the contribution of this library to the history of the formation of the Buddhist Tibetan canon. My particular interest lies in the study of some of the translation techniques adopted over various periods which yield tantalising hints of the diachronic development through which Tibetans absorbed and assimilated Buddhist philosophy and religion adopting a newly coined specific language.

THE DISCOVERY

The restoration of the Khor chags monastery and the building of the river embankment were undertaken in the year 2000.[1] The monastery stands on the banks of a river (see Plate 1) and even in 1935 Giuseppe

[1] These renovations were undertaken, under the direction of Enrico dell'Angelo, by the Italian Non-Governmental Organisation A.S.I.A. (Associazione di Solidarietà Internazionale in Asia) thanks to financial aid from the TRACE Foundation and Mnga' ris Prefecture.

Tucci himself, during his expedition to the Western Himalayas had noted the threat posed by the turbulent waters flowing past it. He warned that the temple was likely to be lost if an embankment were not built to protect it.[2] During this restoration works a collection of manuscript texts came to light, hidden in three walled hollow rooms (see Plates 2 and 3) in the *'du khang*, the temple that, together with another shrine, known as the *lo tsā ba'i lha khang*, constitutes the monastic settlement of Khor chags. The collection, consisting of hundreds of volumes, had been piled up as infill in the three rooms formed by the construction of three new internal walls along the left, right and central walls of the *'du khang* cella. In addition to the books, the hidden rooms concealed eight standing clay statues right up against the walls, about two metres high, and thousands of small clay *tsha tsha*. The extra walls may have been constructed as a result of some structural disaster, in order to recreate the cella with a new reduced perimeter. We don't know exactly when the second walls were built, and nobody in the monastery had any idea of the existence of the walled rooms, not even the oldest monks. We might imagine that they could have been built after the damage caused by a devastating raid on the monastery, perhaps during the 1841 invasion of western Tibet by General Zorawar Singh or as a consequence of an earthquake, or of a great flood of the neighbouring river.

After the find, the NGO A.S.I.A. and the local government of Mnga' ris Prefecture set up a feasibility study to verify the importance of the discovery and to organise a project for the preservation and study of the buried library collection. Other aspects of the project include the study and restoration of the frescoes, which are still visible on the walls of both temples, of the statues which were found in the walled-in rooms and of the doorway of the *'du khang*. This doorway was described by Tucci in *Tibet Ignoto* as one of the most notable works of art in Western Tibet, dating it to the 11th or, at the latest, the 12th century.[3] It is still in

[2] "E' sulle rive del fiume lambito da acque turbinose che con rabbia scavano la terra e trascinano i deboli argini che la pietà dei fedeli e l'interesse dei monaci hanno costruito in fretta con pietre e alberi portati da non so dove; certo da qualche valle hymalayana verso l'India. Ma ci vuol altro: se non costruiranno arginature potenti e, più a monte, non si cercherà di piegare il corso del fiume con una gettata, il tempio di Khojarnath è destinato alla prossima rovina" (Tucci 1937: 41).

[3] "Il tempio è costruito sullo schema di quelli di Rin chen bzang po; ma l'unica cosa antica che resti è il portale senza dubbio una delle più notevoli opere d'arte del Tibet occidentale... In tutta l'India non c'è neppure una porta che possa paragonarsi a que-

place despite the horrendous mutilation of the wooden carvings, due to the tragic events of the Cultural Revolution.

The Temples According to Historical Literature

We do have some sources which refer to the Khor chags temples. According to Tibetan historical literature, the monastery of Khor chags (also spelled Kha char, Kho car and Khojarnath in its Indianised form), was one of the temples built in 996 by Rin chen bzang po, under royal patronage, together with the temples of Tho ling, Nyar ma, Ta pho etc.

For example, in the *Kho char dkar chag*, written in 1880 by Ngor Khang gsar mkhan po, Ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan, we find that the Khor chags *gtsug lag khang* was built to house a silver Jo bo statue that was initially intended by the king Khor re to be housed in the new temple of Gser mkhar gtsug lag khang, near Dkar dung castle. According to this text, the chariot transporting the statue from the place where it had been cast, in the plain of Bye ma'i thang, to the Dkar dung castle, bumped against a miracle stone, called in the text *amolika* stone. At this point the statue began to speak, saying these words: "*Nga 'dir 'khor zhing*!" ("In this place I was formed!"), "*Nga 'dir chags so*!", ("Here I stay!"), and this was the reason for both the foundation and the name of the monastery of Khor chags.[4]

The historical sources, such as the *Rin chen bzang po rnam thar 'bring po*, the *Lde'u jo sras chos 'byung,* the *Mnga' ris rgyal rabs*, the *Kho char dkar chag*, the *Jo bo dngul mched gsum dkar chag* etc., do not agree on the identity of the founder of the first temple.[5] However from the information found in the *Mnga' ris rgyal rabs* and the other sources, studied by Roberto Vitali,[6] we can sketch out this sequence events:

---

sta di Khojarnath e risalga come questa all'XI o al massimo al XII secolo" (*ibid.*: 43–44). On the dating of this portal see also Luczanits 1996: 72.

[4] Cf. *Kho char dkar chag*: f. 8a (a very damaged printed edition in the Tucci Tibetan Fund in the library of Is.I.A.O. (Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente) in Rome, catalogued in TTF, 2: 359, (No. 813). It corresponds to the text published in 1988 by the Bod ljongs mnga' ris gzhungs gces skyong khang of Dharamsala and studied by Roberto Vitali in Vitali 1996: 254.

[5] Cf. Vitali 1996: 258–65.

[6] *Ibid*.

— In 996 Khor re founded the Yid bzhin lhun grub gtsug lag khang.
— Then Lha lde built the Rin chen brtsegs pa'i gtsug lag khang and the great silver statue of 'Jam dpal (Mañjuśrī).[7]
— Later in the 12th century the Rin chen brtsegs pa'i gtsug lag khang was renovated by Grags btsan lde.
— Subsequently, in the early 13th century, Rnam lde mgon added two *jo bo sku mched* to the principal Jo bo and in the middle of the same century Stobs lding btsan built the Bkra shis brtsegs pa'i gtsug lag khang. Between the end of the 13th and the beginning of the 14th century Bsod nams lde renovated and expanded the entire complex of Khor chags monastery.

As for the names of the temples according to Vitali, in the context of the *Mnga' ris rgyal rabs*, the Yid bzhin lhun grub gtsug lag khang has to be understood as one and the same as the Rin chen brtsegs pa'i gtsug lag khang, while the Bkra shis brtsegs pa'i gtsug lag khang is unanimously recognised by the historical sources at our disposal as the second temple built at Khor chags during the 13th century. Although the local people and the monks speak of the two temples in the same way as Tucci recounted in his *Tibet Ignoto*: as the *lo tsā ba'i lha khang* and the *'du khang*, we can safely identify the *lo tsā ba'i lha khang* with the Yid bzhin lhun grub gtsug lag khang (alias Rin chen brtsegs pa'i lha khang) (see Plate 4). In fact, it is in this temple that the *sku mched gsum* the 'three silver brothers' statues were housed before the Cultural Revolution, as the 1935 Tucci photographic archives document. The other larger *'du khang* temple, where the three hidden rooms were discovered, is evidently the 13th century Bkra shis brtsegs pa'i gtsug lag khang.

Sampling the Findings

During a feasibility mission I was able to verify that the walled collections included thousands of scattered manuscript folios of the *Prajñāpāramitā* in a state of complete disorder, buried in the central room, while the room on the left had been filled up to the ceiling with hundreds and hundreds of other texts, without their bindings, that must have been part of the previous canonical collection of the monastery.

[7] On a possible different identification of the Jo bo image see Heller 2003: 28–34.

The texts were in some cases scattered, but several were complete, most of the copies were manuscripts, and included works concerning *vinaya, abhidharma, pramāṇa, tantra, sādhana*, ritual collections etc. A large manuscript scroll *dkar chag* of the monastery was also found, at present being studied by Enrico dell'Angelo.

I was unable to carry out paper and ink analysis, so in order to understand the age of the findings I photographed some texts preserved in the collection. Among the texts I chose to study of which the majority seemed quite homogeneous from a paleographical point of view, I took out as a sample a partly annotated manuscript edition of the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti* (hereafter MNS) for the following reasons: the MNS is one of the most popular canonical texts of Indo-Tibetan Buddhism; it is a litany in 167 stanzas; in its 7th stanza it refers to the process of realisation (*abhisaṃbodhi*) of the *Māyājālatantra* and in the colophon we read that it was extracted from the *samādhi* chapter of the *Māyājālatantra* in 16,000 verses, the principal tantra of the *mahāyoga* class. The Tanjur preserves several commentaries, both belonging to the first propagation, such as those authored by 'Jam dpal bshes gnyen (Mañjuśrīmitra*),[8] Sgeg pa'i rdo rje (Vilāsavajra*),[9] 'Jam dpal grags pa (Mañjuśrīkīrti*)[10], Zla ba grags pa (Candrakīrti*),[11] Vimalamitra[12] and Dga' rab rdo rje (Surativajra*)[13] and to the second propagation such as the *Amṛitakaṇikā* by Nyi ma'i dpal ye shes (Raviśrījñāna).[14] The principal systems of its exegesis belong to the *yogatantra* and to the *anuttarayogatantra* tradition, among which the Kālacakratantra tradition holds an important place. Judging from the date of its earliest commentators, we can trace its appearance in India during the first half of the 8th century. Consequently, this text has a large number of witnesses both

8 *Nāmasaṃgītivṛtti (Mtshan yang dag par brjod pa'i 'grel pa)* Tōh 2532

9 *Ārya Nāmasaṃgītiṭīkāmantrārthāvalokinī ('Phags pa mtshan yang dag par brjod pa'i rgya cher 'grel pa mtshan gsang sngags kyi don du rnam par lta ba)* Tōh 2533.

10 *Ārya Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgītiṭikā ('Phags pa 'jam dpal gyi mtshan yang dag par brjod pa'i rgya cher bshad pa)* Tōh 2534.

11 *Ārya Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgītivṛtti ('Phags pa 'jam dpal gyi mtshan yang dag par brjod pa shes bya ba'i 'grel pa)* Tōh 2535.

12 *Nāmasaṃgītivṛtti-nāmārthaprakāśakaraṅadīpa (Mtshan yang dag par brjod pa'i 'grel pa mtshan don gsal bar byed pa'i sgron ma)* Tōh 2092.

13 *Ārya Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgītyarthālokakara ('Phags pa 'jam dpal gyi mtshan yang dag par brjod pa'i don gsal bar byed pa)* Tōh 2093.

14 *Amṛtakaṇika-nāma-āryanāmasaṃgīti-ṭippaṇī*. This is the only commentary to the MNS extant in Sanskrit in various editions (Tib. '*Phags pa mtshan yang dag par brjod pa'i mdor bshad bdud rtsi'i thigs pa* Tōh 1395).

in Sanskrit and in Tibetan and might represent an ideal basis for a textual analysis which would contribute to the historical investigation. Considering the Tibetan text of the MNS, we can outline the following diachronic development:

A. The first Tibetan version goes back to the age of the empire, during the *bstan pa snga dar*, since it is listed in the Lhan dkar ma catalogue.[15] As a matter of fact, the Dun huang collection preserves several different Tibetan manuscripts of the MNS.[16]

B. Between the end of the 10th century and the first half of the 11th, during the *bstan pa phyi dar*, Rin chen bzang po (958-1055) endorsed a new translation (or revision) of it. This version might be the one preserved in the independent transmission of the Phug brag Kanjur[17] where we find a Tibetan translation of the MNS that, according to the colophon, was authored by Rin chen bzang po and his Kashmiri collaborators Śraddhākaravarma and Kamalagupta.[18]

C. Subsequently this text was revised by Blo gros brtan pa (born 1276) and his version is the one transmitted in all the Kanjur editions. We know, in fact, from Tibetan sources that Bu ston in the early 14th century decided to include Blo gros brtan pa's revision in the Kanjur.[19]

D. Then in the 15th century Zhwa lu lo tsā ba, Dharmapālabhadra (1444-1527), revised it again and this new translation is preserved among the Tucci Tibetan Fund in the library of Is.I.A.O in Rome.[20]

At this point the first problem to solve is the identification of the Khor chags manuscript Tibetan version of the MNS.

As discussed above, we know from the historical sources that the Bkra shis brtsegs pa'i gtsug lha khang (where the manuscripts were found) dates from the middle of the 13th century, while the Yid bzhin lhun grub gtsug lag khang goes back to the time of Rin chen bzang po himself (second half of the 10th century-first half of the 11th).

---

15 Cf. Lalou 1953: 329 (XV–438).

16 Cf. de la Vallée Poussin 1962: 43–44 (No. 112); 126 (No. 381); 126–27 (No. 382) and Lalou 1939: 33 (No. 99).

17 Jampa Samten 1992: 147 (No. 410).

18 "*Rgya gar gyi mkhan po śraddhākaravarma dang kamalagupta dang zhu chen gyi lo tsā ba rin chen bzang pos bsgyur cing te gtan la phab pa'o*" in MNS, Phu brag Kanjur, Ka, f. 23a. In Tucci (1933: 39–53) we find an accurate analysis of the numerous Indian *paṇḍit*s who collaborated with Rin chen bzang po in his intensive work of Tibetan translation (or of revision) of Buddhist literature.

19 Cf. Bu ston, *Rgyud 'bum gyi dkar chag*, vol. 26, (La) f. 376, in TTF, 1: 40 (No. 41 a–b), See also Eimer, 1989: 77.

20 Cf. TTF, 2: 120 (No. 353, 1).

Therefore the most fascinating and intriguing possibility is that our manuscript corresponds to version B, the Tibetan translation made (or revised) by Rin chen bzang po himself, but considering the various phases of construction of the temples we might also expect to find the post-14th century canonical edition of the texts (version C or D), or else, as in the case of several texts belonging to the most important collection of manuscripts kept in Ta pho,[21] to the previous *snga dar* version (version A).

As our fragment has no colophon, comparative textual analysis is the only way to determine to which version it belongs. In addition, this analysis might give us some hints about the chronological context of the materials—or at least some of them—recently rediscovered at Khor chags.

The Analysis

The Khor chags MNS text presents itself in fragmentary form: the extant folios go from folio 3a to 6b (stanzas 7d–31a), from 21a to 34b (stanzas 53b-147c) and 36a to 37b (stanzas 154a–164d). Written on a brownish thick paper, the leaves measure about 60 cm x 9 cm (see Plates 5, 6 and 7). The text is very widely spaced, each folio has only three lines in *dbu med* script. In the first six folios, the large space between one line and the other is filled with interlinear glosses in a very small *dbu med* script. Unfortunately, as mentioned above, the colophon is missing. Glosses are absent from stanzas 53 to 161 so one might think that it is an unfinished annotation, but yet curiously enough, interlinear glosses reappear in the last two folios for stanzas 162–164. The ink used is black, with the exception of a few glosses in red. The text does not include the description of the benefits (*anuśaṃsā*). After stanza 162 it follows on directly with the display of the mantra (*mantravinyāsa*) and the concluding stanzas 163 and 164.

There are some paleographic elements and orthographic archaisms such as:

— A single opening sign (*mgo yig)*, the style pre-dating the double loop, which came to be attested in Tibet after the 14th century.[22]

— The presence of *tsheg* before the *shad*.

[21] Cf. Harrison, 1996; Scherrer-Schaub and Bonani 2002: 212.

— *Ya* subscripts representing the palatalisation of *ma* before *gi gu* and *'greng bu*.
— Regular usage of the *da drag*.
— No consistent distinction between the graphemes p/b and t/d.
— Regular usage of the genitive *kyi* for *gyi* after suffix *na* (as in the case *kun kyi*).

What is more interesting is that the transliteration of the Sanskrit mantras does not correspond to the standardised post-14th century system of transcription for the Sanskrit found in the Tibetan canon.

Although these characteristics may suggest the antiquity of the text, or at least give evidence of a period that precedes the compilation of the Tibetan canon in the early 14th century as mentioned above, a critical textual analysis is necessary in order to reach any conclusion. Therefore the following diplomatic edition of this fragment seeks to determine, by comparison of variant readings, to which textual transmission the Khor chags fragment is related. For this purpose I deemed necessary, as a preliminary step, to collate the Khor chags fragment (hereafter K), with the following editions:
— The Tibetan translations of the MNS preserved among the Dun huang documents, kept in the British Library and catalogued as: IOL Tib J 112.2 (hereafter J112), IOL Tib J 381 (hereafter J381), IOL Tib J 382 (hereafter J382).[23] J112 is in a very fragmentary form. It goes from stanza 9b to 142, (fols. 40–52) but the major part of the folios are damaged so that several stanzas are lost. J381 is complete and without lacunas. It goes from the beginning to stanza 164, including the colophon, but without inserting the *anuśaṃsā*. J382 includes the text from stanza 7b to stanza 162 and inserts the *anuśaṃsā*; but the last folio, with the *mantravinyāsa* and the concluding stanzas 164–67, is missing.
— The Phug brag Kanjur edition (vol. 99, *rgyud* Ka 1–23a; hereafter F). As pointed out above, its colophon specifies that it was translated

[22] For a table on the formal characteristics of Tibetan manuscripts, divided in type I (up to 1190), type II (up to 1390) and type III (1430–500) see Scherrer-Schaub 1999: 25 and Scherrer-Schaub and Bonani 2002: 203. According to this table, the Khor chags manuscript corresponds to type I.

[23] I was able to have easy access to J382 on the internet, thanks to the *International Dun huang Project* of the British Library while I am very grateful to Mr Burkhard Quessel of the British Library for having sent me the xerox copies of mss J381 and J112. I have not yet been able to consult the other Dun huang manuscript of the MNS, preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris.

by Śraddhākaravarma, Kamalagupta and Rin chen bzang po.[24]
— Two manuscripts found in the collection of Gondhla monastery in Lahul, Himachal Pradesh (hereafter G1 and G2). G1 is in a fragmentary form: it includes stanzas 1 to 54 (ff.1a–8a), stanzas 110–68, and colophon (ff.15a–20b). G2 is entire (1a–168). Both the texts don't contain the *anuśaṃsā*. Their colophons correspond *verbatim* to that of the Phug brag edition, specifying that the text had been translated by Śraddhākaravarma, Kamalagupta and Rin chen bzang po.[25]
— A *Rnying ma rgyud 'bum* edition, in this case the Sde dge edition, vol. Tha, ff. 23–35 (hereafter Nyi). This text does not provide information about the Tibetan translator.[26]
— Blo gros brtan pa's revision, preserved in the 'mainstream' Kanjur editions, in this case the Peking Kanjur edition (Kyoto reprint 1955–61).[27]
— The Zhwa lu extracanonical edition, revised by Zhwa lu lo tsā ba, Dharmapālabhadra who, as mentioned in the colophon of the text, revised the earlier 'famous translations' (*grags che ba rnams*) of Rin chen bzang po and Blo gros brtan pa, comparing it with the original Indian comments and texts.[28]

---

24 *Phug brag Manuscript Kanjur*, Microfiche Edition of the Institute for Advanced Studies of World Religions, Stony Brook, N.Y. 1990. Catalogued in Eimer 1993: 38 (410 #898 1B–4E/39). I must express my gratitude to Dr Helmut Eimer of the Indologisches Seminar in Bonn who kindly sent me a xerox copy of this text and read a preliminary version of my paper offering, as usual, very precious advice.

25 These texts were photographed during the multidisciplinary research undertaken by the 'Institute of South Asian, Tibetan and Buddhist Studies' of the University of Vienna and the Is.I.A.O of Rome and kindly given by Dr Helmut Tauscher. From a palaeographical point of view both these texts seem to be much later than the K manuscript, showing the distinctive formal elements, ensuing the 15th century: absence of inverted i-graph, *ya btags* and *da drag*, multiple opening signs (*mgo yig*), distinct well proportioned elongated script etc.

26 Among the other *Rnying ma rgyud 'bum* editions, I could verify that the editions of Mtshams brag (vol. 21, Zha ff. 423–42) and Gting skyes (vol. 15, Ba, ff. 97–124; Kaneko #196) preserve the same Tibetan version. I could easily have access to the text preserved in the Mtshams brag edition through the web page of the the Tibetan and Himalayan Digital Library of the University of Virginia Library.

It is interesting to note that also the MNS version preserved in the *Rnying ma bka' ma rgyas pa* collection (Bdud 'joms edition, vol.III, pp. 6–29) agrees with Nyi. In its colophon, however, it is stated that the text was translated in Tibetan by the Indian master Padmasambhava and the two Tibetan translators Ska ba dpal brtsegs and Cog ro klu yi rgyal mtshan and revised by Vairocana (*rgya gar gyi slob dpon padma 'byung gnas dang bod kyi lo tsā bas ka cog zung gis bsgyur cing be ro tsa nas zhus chen gyis gtan la phab pa'o*).

27 Cf. TTP, I, #2, pp. 117–24 (Rgyud, Ka, 1a–15b)

On collating these texts, the first thing that stands out is the difference between the canonical edition (i.e. the revision by Blo gros brtan pa), and K. Its variant readings are so frequent and so divergent, that it can hardly be collated to K.[29]

Thus, in the analysis here, it was not deemed relevant to include the numerous variant readings and rephrasings of the text found in Blo gros brtan pa's version.

Moreover it is interesting to observe that Zhwa lu lo tsā ba's version is nearer to K than to Blo gros brtan pa's revision. It is worth mentioning, for the moment, that Zhwa lu lo tsā ba in many cases restored the text of the Tibetan translation which preceded Blo gros brtan pa's version. Here its variant readings are not included because the period in which this work was done is too far from K to consider them relevant here.

Having excluded from our witnesses Blo gros brtan pa's and Zhwa lu lo tsā ba's translations, let us now consider the other editions in order to reach a conclusion on a preliminary, tentative dating of K and a possible stemma of its transmission.

Initially, the reader will notice striking evidence of the close relation of K, G1, G2 and F.

As already remarked above, G1, G2 and F colophons coincide perfectly in saying that the texts were translated by Rin chen bzang po and the Kashmirians Śraddhākaravarma and Kamalagupta. Therefore as K agrees with G1, G2 and F, we can deduce that it corresponds with this transmission of the text (version B; see above XX), although from a paleographical point of view it appears considerably older than the three other witnesses. G1 and G2, in fact, as mentioned above, present

[28] See above footnote 20. The Tibetan texts given by Wayman in his study of the MNS, agrees with Zhwa lu lo tsā ba's version (cf. Wayman 1985). Unfortunately I was unable to compare the Tibetan text of the MNS in the quadrilingual undated edition by Raghu Vira.

[29] What is peculiar to Blo gros brtan pa's revision is the more mechanical method of translation from the Sanskrit, which could be defined as a system of word by word translation, where even the Sanskrit word order is respected. The method is the same found in 12th century Tibetan translation of the Sanskrit texts, for instance in the Kālacakratantra literature. One should also consider that Blo gros brtan pa might have had access to a Sanskrit version, diverging from the text that was translated by his predecessors. In some stanzas, for example, we can easily demonstrate that Blo gros brtan pa's Tibetan translation matches exactly with one, or few, of the Sanskrit extant editions (noteworthy evidence to be found in stanzas 60, 97, 144) A discussion on this different Tibetan renditions, although quite interesting in my opinion, goes beyond the scope of this paper, but I hope to reconsider this problem on a different occasion. For a very accurate edition of the Sanskrit text see Davidson 1981.

none of the paleographical characteristics of K nor, naturally, does F, which as we know belongs to the 17th century.

Consequently we can state that K corresponds to the archetype of the text of the MNS preserved in the Phug brag Kanjur.

On the other hand, as far as the Sanskrit transcription of the mantras is concerned, it is important to note that K agrees more with the Sanskrit transcriptions of the Dun huang mss than with all other sources.

Let us now consider the Dun huang mss.

J112 (although very fragmentary) and J381 correspond in the majority of the cases with K, with only minor variations, while the third manuscript, J382, contains several single readings and variant rephrasing of the Tibetan translation which are not attested in any of the other sources here analysed. These are underlined in the footnotes to the diplomatic edition of the text in the Appendix.

The Dun huang mss, therefore, preserve two variant Tibetan versions of the MNS: one that corresponds with the text attributed to Rin chen bzang po, Śraddhākaravarma and Kamalagupta, as it agrees with K, G1, G2 and F (version B); the other might, instead, correspond to the Tibetan translation of the MNS circulating during the *bstan pa snga dar* period, before Rin chen bzang po's imprimatur (version A; see above p. XX).

Obviously it is not possible here to reach any definitive conclusion on this problem which goes far beyond the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, it is highly significant for our purposes to point out that two of the Dun huang mss of the MNS preserved in the British Library agree with K.

Another noteworthy result of the collation of the texts is clarification of the position of Nyi: it agrees with K, G1 G2 and F, i.e. it conforms to the translation authored by Rin chen bzang po. It would be quite interesting to research why the *Rnying ma rgyud 'bum* preserves Rin chen bzang po's translation of the MNS but this too would be beyond the scope of the present article. Moreover it should be noted that, considering the period of the formation of the *Rnying ma rgyud 'bum*, the transcription of the mantras as found in the Sde dge edition agrees with the standardised post-14th century system of transcription for Sanskrit found in the Kanjur and in the later sources, thus providing evidence of the period in which this edition was prepared.

Conclusion

To conclude, we can state that K is very near to Rin chen bzang po's archetype and may very probably be traced back to the first phases of the foundation of the Khor chags settlement, preceding the 12th century. As far as I know, it corresponds to the oldest witness of Rin chen bzang po's translation of the MNS. The considerable importance of such a finding requires no further comment.

Moreover, analysis of the Khor chags fragment gives us valuable indications on the history of the Phug brag Kanjur's formation. As other scholars have maintained, and as demonstrated by the present case, the Phug brag collection proves to be an independent transmission of the Buddhist canon in Western Tibet that preserves texts that are excluded from the other lines of transmission of the canon, whose importance is crucial in our understanding of the Tibetan assimilation of the Buddhist literature.

Furthermore, it is evident from this case that the Khor chags hidden library contains texts preceding the constitution of the Phug brag Kanjur, and this would indicate the considerable significance of some of the texts concealed in its hidden library for the study of the formation of Tibetan Buddhist canonical literature.

The analysis of the literature found in the libraries of Western Tibet temples started not long ago, yet it is already giving notable results in the study of one of the most fascinating and complex periods of Tibetan history.[30] It is our hope that projects like this might develop further with the future collaboration of the local governments, and make it possible for a larger audience of scholars to contribute to our understanding of one of the most important cultural heritages of Asian civilisations.

[30] For the results of the multidisciplinary research in Ta pho, see Steinkellner 1994; Klimburg-Salter 1997; Petech and Luczanits (eds) 1999; Scherrer-Schaub and Steinkellner (eds) 1999; Zimmermann 2002.

Bibliography

Bu ston. *Rgyud 'bum gyi dkar chag*. *In The Collected Work of Buston Rin chen grub*. Vol. La (26) Lhasa block print edition in the Tucci Tibetan Fund in the Library of Is.IAO, Rome (No 41 a–b, section 6).

Davidson, R.M. 1981. The litany of names of Mañjuśrī. *In* M. Strickmann (ed.) *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honour of R.A. Stein*. Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques, XX, Bruxelles: Institut Belge des Hautes Études Chinoises, 1–69.

Eimer, H. 1993. *Location List for the Texts in the Microfiche Edition of the Phug brag Kanjur. Compiled from the microfiche edition and Jampa Samten's descriptive catalogue*. Bibliographia Philologica Buddhica, Series Maior, V. Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies.

—— 1989. *Der Tantra-Katalog des Bu ston im Vergleich mit der Abteilung Tantra des tibetischen Kanjur. Studie, Textausgabe, Konkordanzen und Indices.* Indica et Tibetica, 17. Bonn: Indica et Tibetica Verlag.

Harrison, P. 1996. Preliminary notes on a *gZung 'dus* manuscript from Tabo. *In* M. Hahn, J.-U. Hartmann and R. Steiner (eds) *Suhṛllekhāḥ: Festgabe für Helmut Eimer*. Swisttal-Odendorf: Indica et Tibetica Verlag.

Heller, A. 2003. The Three Silver Brothers. *Orientations* 34(4), 28–34.

Jampa Samten. 1992. *A Catalogue of the Phug-brag Manuscript Kanjur*. Dharamsala.

Kho char dkar chag: Ngag dbang bsod nams rgyal mtshan, *Lhar bcas 'gro ba'i mchod sdong jo bo dngul sku mched gsum sngon byung gi gtam rabs brjod pa rin chen baidurya sngon po'i pi wam*. Block print in the Tucci Tibetan Fund in the Library of Is IAO, Rome (No. 813).

Klimburg-Salter, D. 1997. *Tabo. A Lamp for the Kingdom: Early Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Art in the Western Himalaya*. Milan: Skira. (1998, New York, N.Y.: Thames and Hudson).

Lalou, M. 1939. *Inventaire des manuscripts tibétains de Touen-houang conservés à la Bibliothèque Nationale, Fond Pelliot Tibétain* n.1–849. Vol.1. Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient–A. Maisonneuve.

—— 1953. Les texts bouddhiques au temps du roi Khri srong lde bcan. JA, CCXLI, 313–53.

Luczanits, C. 1996. Early Buddhist wood carving from Himachal Pradesh. *Orientations* 27(6), 67–75.

Petech, L. and C. Luczanits (eds) 1999. *Inscriptions from the Tabo Main Temple, Texts and Translation.* Serie Orientale Roma, LXXXIII. Rome: Is.I.A.O.

Raghu Vira. n.d. (ed.) *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*. Śatapitaka Series vol. 18. New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture.

Scherrer-Schaub C. 1999. Towards a methodology for the study of old Tibetan manuscripts. *In* Scherrer-Schaub and Steinkellner (eds) 1999.

—— and G. Bonani 2002. Establishing a typology of the old Tibetan manuscripts: a multidisciplinary approach. *In* S. Whitfield (ed.) *Dunhuang Manuscript Forgeries*. London: The British Library, 184–215.

—— and E. Steinkellner (eds) 1999. *Tabo studies II: Manuscripts, Texts, Inscriptions and the Arts.* Serie Orientale Roma, LXXXVII. Rome: Is.I.A.O.

Steinkellner, E. 1994. A report of the 'Kanjur' of Ta pho. *East and West* 44(1), 115–36.

Tucci, G. 1933. *Indo-Tibetica, II, Rin c'en bzaṅ po e la rinascita del buddhismo nel Tibet intorno al mille*. Roma: Reale Accademia d'Italia.

—— 1937. *Santi e briganti del Tibet ignoto*. Milano: Hoepli (repr. 1978 *Tibet Ignoto*, Roma: Newton Compton).

de la Vallée Poussin, L. 1962. *Catalogue of the Tibetan Manuscript from Tun-huang in the India Office Library*. London: Oxford University Press.

Vitali, R. 1996. *The Kingdoms of Gu ge Pu hrang According to Mnga' ris Rgyal rabs by Gu ge Mkhan chen Ngag dbang grags pa*. Dharamsala: Tho ling gtsug lag khang lo gcig stong 'khor ba'i rjes dran mdzad sgo'i go sgrig tshogs chung.

Wayman, A. 1985. *Chanting the Names of Mañjuśrī*. Boston and London: Shambhala.

Zimmermann, M. 2002. The Tabo fragments and the stemma of the Tibetan *Tathāgatagarbhasūtra*. *In* H. Eimer and D. Germano (eds) *The Many Canons of Tibetan Buddhism. PIATS 2000: Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the Ninth Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Leiden 2000*. Leiden/ Boston/ Köln: Brill, 177–96.

Sigla

Kaneko: Kaneko Eiichi. *Ko-Tantora Zenshū Kaidai Mokuroku, A Complete Annotated Catalogue of the Old Tantra Collection (rNying ma rgyud 'bum, gTing skyes edition)*. Tokyo: Kokusho Kankhukai, 1982

Tōh: Hakuju Ui *et al.* (eds) *Chibetto Daizōkyō Sōmokuroku. A Catalogue-Index of the Tibetan Buddhist Canons (Bkaḥ-ḥgyur and Bstan-ḥgyur)*. Sendai: Tōhoku Imperial University, 1934 (Repr. Tokyo 1970).

TTF, 1: De Rossi Filibeck, E. *Catalogue of the Tucci Tibetan Fund in the Library of Is.M.E.O.* Roma: Is.M.E.O, 1994.

TTF, 2: De Rossi Filibeck, E. *Catalogue of the Tucci Tibetan Fund in the Library of Is.I.A.O.* Roma: Is.I.A.O, 2003.

TTP: Suzuki Daisetz (ed.) *The Tibetan Tripitaka. Peking Edition*. Reprinted under the supervision of the Otani University-Kyoto, Tokyo, Kyoto, 1955–1961.

Appendix

The diplomatic edition of the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*'s manuscript fragment, preserved in the Khor chags hidden library

Editorial signs:[1]
= rubbed or broken off grapheme
°°°* *rin chen spungs shad* with three dots
°°* *rin chen spungs shad* with two dots
°* *rin chen spungs shad* with one dot
§ *sbrul shad*
/ *shad*
// *nyis shad*

[...] lost

rgyu 'phrul dra bas[2] mngon rdzogs pa'i //
byang chub ci[3] nas bdag thob mdzod § °°°* // (7)

°°* § nyon mongs pas ni sems dkrugs shing //
myi shes 'dam du byang[4] ba 'i //
sems can kun[5] la sman pa dang //
bla myed 'bras bu thob pa'i[6] phyir // (8)

°°°* § rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das //
'gro ba'i bla ma ston pa po //
dam tshig chen po de[7] nyid mkhyen[8] //
dbang po bsam ba[9] mkhyen[10] mchog kyis[11] // (9)

---

[1] In the annotation I have omitted indication of the reversed *gi gu*, attested only in J112; J381 and J382. As required in a diplomatic edition, I have limited myself to transcribing the Sanskrit mantras consistently with the transcription system used for the Tibetan (*Extended Wylie Transliteration Scheme* by N. Garson & D. Germano in The Tibetan &Himalayan Digital Library)

[2] bas: ba'i J382

[3] ci: ji J382

[4] byang: bying J381; J382; G1; G2; F; Nyi

[5] kun: <u>rnams</u> J382

[6] pa'i: bya'i G1; G2; F; Nyi

[7] de: <u>omit de</u> J382

[8] mkhyen: mkhyend pa J382

[9] ba: pa G1; G2; F; Nyi;

[10] mkhyen: mkhyend J382

[11] kyis: gis J112; J382; G1; G2; F; Nyi; gyis J381

°*bcom ldan ’das kyi[12] ye shes sku //
gtsug tor[13] chen po tshig kyi[14] bdag //
ye shes sku ste[15] rang ’byung[16] ba //
’jam dpal ye shes sems dpa’i[17] § // (10)

myING[18] ni yang dad brjod pa’i mchog /
don zab don ni rgya che zhing //
don chen[19] mtshungs myed rab zhi ba’i[20] //
thog ma bar dang[21] mthar dgye’[22] ba[23] // (11)

[24]’das pa’i sangs rgyas rnams kyis gsungs //
ma ’ongs rnams dang[25] gsungs ’gyur la //
da ltar ’byung ba’[26] rdzogs sangs rgyas //
yang dang yang du gsungs[27] pa[28] gang // (12)

rgyud chen[29] sgyu ’phrul dra ba las //
rdorje ’chang[30] cen[31] sang sngags ’chang //
dpag myed rnams kyi bka’[32] bzhin du //
klur[33] blangs gang lags bshad du gsol // (13)

---

12 kyi: <u>ni</u> J382; kyis F
13 tor: gtor F
14 kyi: J112; gi J381; J382; G2; F; Nyi
15 ste: ni J382
16 ’byung: byung: J382; G1; G2; F; Nyi
17 ’i: yi J382; G1; F; Nyi
18 myING: mtshan G2
19 chen : <u>cen</u> J382
20 ba’i: ba J112; J381; J382; G1; G2; F; Nyi
21 dang: omit dang J382
22 dgye: dge J382, G1; G2; F; Nyi; mar J381
23 ba: ba yi J382; dge J381
24 J382 inserts: mtshan ni yang dag bsdul ba’i mchog // J112 inserts: bsam ba’i khyad bar ji bzhin du /
25 dang: kyang J381; J382; G1; G2; F; Nyi
26 ’byung ba’i: byung ba J382; G1; F
27 gsungs: gsung J382, F, Nyi
28 pa: ba J382; F;
29 chen: cen J112; J382
30 ’chang: ’dzin J112; J382
31 cen: chen G1; G2; F; Nyi
32 bka’: dga’ J112; J382; Nyi; dka’ G1; F
33 klur: glur J112; J381; J382; G2; F; glu G1

’gon[34] po rdzogs sangs rgyas kun kyi[35] //
gsang ’dzin ci[36] nas bdag ’gyur phyir //
nges par ’byung kyi[37] bar du ’di[38] //
bdag kyi[39] bsam ba[40] brtan por[41] bzung[42] // (14)

nyon mongs ma lus bsal[43] ba dang //
myi shes ma lus spang ba[44] phyir //
bsam pa’i khyad par ji bzhin du[45] //
sems can rnams la[46] bshad par ’tshal *° // (15)

*° gsang dbang lag na rdo rje ’is[47] //
de bzhin bshegs la de skad du //
gsol nas thal mo bsbyar[48] byas nas[49] //
lus btud nas ni spyan sngar ’dug *° // (16)[50]

*° § § de nas bcom lan[51] shag kya[52] thub //
rdzogs pa’i sangs rgyas rkang gnyis mchog //
nyid kyi zhal nas ljags bzang ba //
ring zhing yangs pa brkyang mdzad te[53] // (17)
’jig rten gsum po snang byed cing //[54]
bdud bzhi’i dgra’ rnams ’dul byed pa //[55]

---

34 ’gon: mgon J112; J381; J382; G2; F, Nyi
35 kyi: gyis J381; G2; gyi: J112; G1; F
36 ci: ji J382
37 kyi: gi J382; G1; F; Nyi; gyi J381; J112
38 ’di: ni J381
39 kyi: gi J112; J381; J382; G1; G2; F; Nyi
40 ba: pa G1; G2; F; Nyi
41 por: pos J112; J382; F; G1; G2; Nyi
42 bzung: gzung J112; J382; G2; bzungs G1; Nyi
43 bsal: bstsald J382; gsal G2
44 ba: ba’i G1; G2; F
45 bsam pa’i khyad par ji bzhin du: bsam ba ji bzhin khyad bar du J112; J382
46 rnams la: don du J381
47 ’is: yis J382; G1; G2; F; Nyi
48 bsbyar: <u>sbyard</u> J382; sbyar J112; J381; G1; G2; F
49 nas: te J112; J381; J382; G1; G2; F; Nyi
50 F and G2 insert: zhus pa’i le’u ste dang po’o
51 lan: ldan J112; J381; J382; G1; G2; F; Nyi
52 shag kya: shAkya G1; G2; F; Nyi
53 te: de J112; J381; J382, G1; G2; F; Nyi
54 ’jig rten gsum po snang byed cing: <u>’dzum ba bstan nas ’jig rten gyi</u> J382
55 bdud bzhi’i dgra’ rnams ’dul byed pa: <u>ngan song gsum ni skyong ba dang</u> J382

sems can rnams kyi ngan song gsum //[56]
sbyong bar byed pa ’a[57] mdzum bstan nas //[58] (18)

tshangs pa ’i gsung ni snyan pa ’is[59] // (19a)

[...] drug ldan zhing[60] //
gnyis su myed par ’byung ba dang[61] //
myi skye chos can ’di gsungs pa // *°(25)[62]

a A/ i I/ u U/ e ai/ o au[63] / aM a /*°°
/ sti[64] to / hri ti / gnya’[65] na mur ti / ra ham / bhud dho[66] /
bhud[67] dha[68] nam / trad[69]ta bar ti nam //[70] (26)

OM vajra tig sna[71] du kha[72] tshe ta[73] prad nya[74] gnya’[75] na mur ta ye /
gnya’[76] na ka[77] ya / ba[78] kyi[79] sha[80] ra / a ra pa tsa na[81] ya te[82] na ma //
(27)§[83]

---

56 sems can rnams kyi ngan song gsum: ’jig rten gsum po snang byed cing J382

57 ’a : ’i J112; J381; G1; G2; F; Nyi

58 sbyong bar byed pa ’a mdzum bstan nas: bdud bzhi ’dul bar byed pa yi J382

59 ’is: yis J382; G1; G2; F

60 drug ldan zhing: ’di drug dang J382

61 gnyis su myed par ’byung ba dang: myi skye chos can tshig bdag gis J382

62 myi skye chos can ’di gsungs pa: tshigs su bcad pa bka’ stsald pa J382

63 a A/ i I/ u U/ e ai/ o au: a a/ i i/ u u/ e e/ o o/ J382

64 sti: s+thi G1; F; Nyi; ca sti J382

65 gnya’: dz+nyA G1, G2, F Nyi; omit dz+nyA J382

66 bhud dho: bu to J381 bud to F

67 bhud: bud F, G1; Nyi; bu J381; G2

68 dha: ta J381

69 trad: t+yad J381; F; G1; Nyi

70 sti to / hri ti / gnya’ na mur ti / ra ham/ bhud dho / bhud dha nam / trad ta var ta nam //: nga ni dus gsum gzhugs pa’i / sangs rgyas kyi ye shes sku / sangs rgyas yin te thugs la gnas // J112; J382;

71 sna: Sh+Na J382; F; G1; G2; Nyi

72 du kha: dug khad J382; J112; dug kha J381

73 ta: da J382; F; G1 Nyi

74 nya: dz+nyA F; G1; G2; Nyi

75 gnya’: dnyA J382; nya J381; dz+nyA F; G1; G2; Nyi

76 gnya’: dz+nyA F; G1; Nyi; nya J381; dnyA J382;

77 ka: kA J382; G1; G2; Nyi

78 ba: wA J382; J112; G1; G2

79 kyi; gi F; G2; gı G1

80 va: shwa J112; J381; J382; G1; G2; F; Nyi

81 na: nA J382; G1; Nyi

82 te: tai J382

83 F inserts: sgyu ’phrul dra bas mngon par dzogs par byan chub pa’i le’u bzhi pa’o //

§ // ’di ltar sangs rgyas bcom ldan ’das /
rdzogs pa’i sangs rgyas a[84] las byung //
a ni yig ’bru kun kyi mchog //
don chen[85] yi ge dam pa yin // (28)

khong nas ’byung ba[86] skye ba myed /
tshigs tu brjod pa spangs pa ste /
brjod pa kun kyi rgyu’i[87] mchog //
tshig kun rab tu gsal bar byed // (29) *°

mchod pa chen po ’dod chags[88] che //
sems can thams cad dga’ bar byed //
mchod pa chen po zhes[89] sdang che //
nyon mongs kun kyi dgra’[90] che ba // (30)

mchod pa chen po sti[91] mug che // (31a)
[...]

bter[92] gshegs ’jig rten rig pa’i mchog //
bdag gir myi dzing ngar myi ’dzind[93] //
bden ba gnyis kyi tshul la gnas // 53 *°

§ ’khor ba’i pha rold[94] mthar sond[95] pa //
bya ba byas pa[96] skam sar gnas //
shes pa ’ba’ zhig nges gsal ba[97] //
§ shes rab mtshon chas rnam[98] ’joms pa //[99] 54

---

84 a: auM J382; om J381; J112
85 chen: cen J382
86 khong nas ’byung ba: srog chen po ste G2
87 ’i: yi G2; F; Nyi
88 ’dod chags: ’dod chags pa F
89 zhes: zhe J112; J381; G1; G2; F; Nyi
90 dgra’: dgrar J382; dgra J381; G1; G2; F
91 sti: gti J112; J381; J382; F; G1; G2; Nyi
92 bter: bde J382; G1; G2; F; Nyi; bder J381
93 dzind: ’dzin J112; J381; J382; G1; G2; F; Nyi
94 rold: rol J381; J382; G1; G2; F; Nyi
95 sond: son J381; J382; G1; G2; F; Nyi
96 pa: shing J382
97 shes pa ‘ba’ zhig nges gsal ba: ye shes ‘ba’ shig las byung ba J112; J381; J382
98 rnam: rnams J112; J381; F
99 shes rab mtshon chas rnam ’joms pa: <u>gcod byed shes rab mtshon cas te</u> J382

dam chos chos rgyal gsal bar ldan /
'jig rten snang bar byed pa'i mchog //
chos kyi dbang phyug chos kyi rgyal //
legs pa'i lam ni stond[100] pa po // 55

§ don grub bsam ba sgrub[101] pa ste /
kun du rtog pa thams cad[102] === //
rnam par myi[103] rtog dbyings myi zad //
chos dbyings dam pa zad myi shes // 56

§ bsod nams ldan[104] bsod nams tshogs[105] //
ye shes ye shes 'byung gnas[106] che //
ye shes ldan ba[107] yod myed shes //
tshogs gnyis tshogs ni tshogs ni[108] bsags[109] pa po // 57

rtag[110] pa kun[111] rgyal rnal 'byord[112] can //
bsam gtan bsam bya blo ldan mchog //
so so rang rig myi g.yo' ba //
mchog gi dang po[113] sku gsum 'chang // 58

sangs rgyas sku lnga'i[114] bdag nyid can[115] //
khyab bdag ye shes lnga'i bdag //
sangs rgyas lnga bdag cod pan can //
§spyan lnga chags pa myed pa 'chang // 59

sangs rgyas thams cad skyed[116] pa po //
sangs rgyas sras po dam pa'i[117] mchog //

---

100 stond: ston J112; J381; J382; G2; F; Nyi
101 sgrub: grub J381; J382; G2; F; Nyi
102 cad: chad J382
103 myi: mi G2; F; Nyi
104 ldan: ldan ba J212; J381; ldan pa G2; F; Nyi
105 bsod nams ldan bsod nams tshogs: <u>bsod nams tshogs te bsod nams ldan</u> J382
106 byung gnas : khyad par J381; J382
107 ba: zhing J112; J382; pa F; Nyi
108 tshogs ni: omit tshogs ni J112; J381; J382; G2; F; Nyi
109 bsags: <u>bstsags</u> J382
110 rtag: rnam J381
111 kun: <u>'gro</u> J382
112 'byord: 'byor F
113 mchog gi dang po: mchog dbang po F
114 sku lnga'i: lnga'i F
115 sangs rgyas sku lnga'i bdag nyid can: <u>sku lnga'i bdag nyid sangs rgyas te</u> J382
116 skyed: bskyed G2; F

shes pa[118] srid ’byung skye gnas myed //
chos las ’byung pa srid pa seld[119] // 60

cig bu[120] sra mkhregs rdorje’i bdag //
skyes ma thag pa[121] ’gro ba’i bdag[122] //
§ nam mkha’ las byung rang ’byung ba //
shes rab ye shes me[123] bo che // 61

’od chen[124] rnam par snang bar byed //
ye shes snang ba[125] lam me ba //
’gro ba’i mar me[126] ye shes sgron //
gzi br=id chen po = ===sal ba // 62

§ sngags drag[127] mnga’ bdag rigs[128] sngags rgyal /
gsang sngags rgyal po don chen[129] byed //
§ tsug[130] tor chen po smad ’byung[131] tsug[132] /
nam mkha’i bdag po sna tshogs ston // 63

sangs rgyas kun bdag[133] dngos po[134] mchog /
’gro kun dga’ ba’i myig dang ldan //
sna tshogs gzugs can skyed[135] pa po //
m=== cing brjed[136] par drang srong che //[137] 64

---

117 dam pa’i: zla myed J382
118 pa: pa’i J382
119 seld: sel J112; J381; G2; F; Nyi
120 cig bu: gcig pu J382; G2; F; Nyi; gcig du J381; J112
121 pa: tu J381; G2; F; Nyi
122 bdag: rje J382
123 me: mye J112; J381; J382
124 chen: cen J382
125 snang ba: skar ma J112; J381; J382
126 me: mye J112; J381; J382
127 drag: mchog J112; J381; J382; G2; F; Nyi
128 rigs: rig J382; G2; Nyi; ri J381
129 chen: cen J382
130 tsug: gtsug J382; G2; F; Nyi
131 smad ’byung: ya mtshan J382
132 tsug: gtsug J382; Nyi
133 bdag: kyi J381; J382
134 dngos po: sku yi J381; J382
135 skyed: bskyed F; Nyi
136 brjed: brjod F
137 m[chod] cing brjed par drang srong che: drang srong che dgus mchod cing brjed J112; J381; J382; G2

§rigs gsum 'chang ba gsang sngags 'chang[138] //
dam tshig chen po gsang sngags 'dzin //
tso bo dkon mchog gsum 'dzin pa //
theg pa mchog gsum stond[139] pa po // 65

don yod zhags pa rnam par rgyal //
'dzind[140] pa chen po rdorje zhags[141] //
// rdorje lcags kyu zhags pa che //[142]
*° rdorje 'jigs byed 'jigs par byed // 66

khro bo'i rgyal po gdong drug 'jigs //
myig drug lag drug stobs dang ldang //
kyeng[143] rus mche' ba tsigs[144] pa po[145] //
ha la ha la rdong[146] brgya[147] pa // 67

§ gshin rje gshed po bgegs kyi rgyal //
rdorje shugs can[148] 'jigs byed[149] pa[150] //
rdorje grags pa rdorje snying //
sgyu 'phrul rdorje gsus po che // 68

rdorje las skyes rdorje bdag //
rdo=== snying po mkha' 'dra ba //
§ myi g.yo' ral pa cig gis bsgyings[151] //
klang[152] chen klo[153] rlon gos su gyon // 69

§drag chen ha ha zhes sgrogs pa //
hi hi zhes sgrogs 'jigs par byed //

---

138 'chang: can J382; Nyi;
139 stond: ston J381; J382; G2; F
140 'dzind: 'dzin; F; G2
141 zhags: zhabs F
142 F inserts: chos kyi dbyings kyi ye shes la bstod pa'i
143 kyeng: keng J112; J381; J382; G2; F; Nyi
144 tsigs: gtsigs J112; J381; J382; G2; Nyi, brtsigs F
145 po: ste J382
146 rdong: gdong J381; J382; G2; F; Nyi
147 brgya: brgya' J382
148 can: chen F
149 byed par: par byed J381
150 rdorje shugs can 'jigs byed pa: 'jigs byed rdo rje'i shugs dang ldan J382
151 bsgyings: bgyings F
152 klang: glang J112; J381; F; Nyi
153 klo: ko J381; 382; G2; F; Nyi; rkor J112

gad mo chen mo[154] gad rgyangs can //
rdorje gad mo cher sgrogs pa // 70

§ rdorje sems dpa' sems dpa' che //
rdorje rgyal po bde ba che //
rdorje drag po dga' ba che' //
rdorje hUM[155] ste hUM[156] zhes sgrogs // 71

§ mtshon tu[157] rdorje mda' thogs pa //
rdorje ral gris[158] ma lus gcod //
rdorje kun 'chang rdo rje can //
rdorje gcig pu[159] g.yul seld[160] pa // 72

§rdorje 'bar ba myig myi bzad //
skra yang rdorje 'bar ba ste //
rdorje 'bebs pa 'bebs pa che //
myig brgya' pa ste rdorje'i myig // 73

lus ni rdorje'i ba spu can //
rdorje'i spu ni cig pu[161] lus[162] //
send[163] mo skyes pa' rdorje rtse //
rdorje snying po pags pa mkhregs[164] // 74

rdorje phreng thogs dpal dang ldang //
rdorje rgyand[165] kyis bsgyand[166] pa ste //
§ gad rgyangs ha ha nges par sgrogs //
yi ge drug pa rdorje'i sgra[167] //75

---

[154] mo: po J381; J382; F
[155] hUM: hung J112; J381; J382
[156] hUM: hung J112; J381; J382
[157] tu: du J381; J382; G2; F; Nyi
[158] gris: GI J112; gri J381; J382; G2
[159] pu: pa J382
[160] seld: sel J381; G2; F; Nyi
[161] pu: pa'i J381
[162] rdorje'i spu ni cig pu lus: lus kun rdo rje'i spu can te J382
[163] send: sen J112; J381; J382; F; Nyi
[164] mkhregs: 'kregs J381; J382
[165] rgyand: rgyan J112; J381; J382, F; Nyi
[166] bsgyand: brgyan J381; F; Nyi; rgyan G2
[167] sgra: sgra' J381

’jam dbyangs chen po’i sgra che ba //
’jig rten gsum na sgra gcig pa[168] //
nam mkha’i[169] mtha’ las[170]sgra sgrogs pa //
sgra dang ldan ba rnams kyi mchog // 76

yang dag bdag myed de bzhin nyid //
yang dag mtha’[171] ste yi ge myed //
stong nyid smra ba’i khyu[172] mchog ste //
sab cing rgya che sgra sgrogs pa // 77

chos kyi dung ste sgra chen ldan //
chos kyi ’gand de[173] sgra bo che //
myi gnas myan ngan ’das pa po //
phyogs bcu’i chos kyi rnga bo che // 78

gzugs myed gzugs bzang dam pa ste //
sna tshogs gzugs can yid las skyes //
gzugs rnams thams cad[174] snang ba’i dpal //
gzugs brnyan ma lus ’chang pa po //79

§ tshugs[175] pa myed cing che bar grags[176] //
khams gsum dbang phyugs chen po ste //
’phags lam shin tu[177] mtho’ la gnas //
dard pa chen po chos kyi tog[178] // 80

§’jig rtend[179] gsum na gzhon lus cig //
gnas rtan[180] rgand[181] po’i skye dgu’i bdag //

---

[168] pa: pa’ J381

[169] mkha’i: ka’i J381; J382

[170] mtha’ las: mkhas klas J382; mtha’ klas G2; Nyi; khams las F

[171] las sgra sgrogs pa // sgra dang ldan ba rnams kyi mchog // yang dag bdag myed de bzhin nyid // yang dag mtha’ *missing in* J381

[172] khyu: khyung F

[173] ’gan de: ’gan ’de J381; J382; ’gaNDI G2; Nyi; ghan de F

[174] cad: chad J382

[175] tshugs: mtshungs G2

[176] bar grags: grags pa’ J381

[177] tu: du J381; F

[178] dard pa chen po chos kyi tog: chos kyi tog ste cher ’byung ba J382

[179] rtend: rten J112; J381; J382

[180] rtan: brtan J112; J381; G2; Nyi; brten F

[181] rgand: rgan J381; J382; F; Nyi

§ sum bcu’[182] rtsa gnyis mtshan ’chang ba //
sdug[183] gu[184] ’jig rten gsum na mdzes // 81

§’jig rten shes legs slob[185] dpon ste[186] //
’jig rten slob[187] dpon ’jigs pa myed[188] //
’gond[189] skyob[190] ’jig rtend[191] yid bcugs[192] pa[193] //
skyabs dang skyob pa bla na myed // 82

nam mkha’[194] mtha’ la long[195] spyod pa //
thams cad[196] mkhyend pa’i ye shes mtsho’ //
§ ma rig sgong[197] nga’i sbubs ’bed[198] pa[199] //
srid pa’i dra ba ’joms pa po // 83

nyon mongs ma lus zhi byed pa //
’khor ba’i rgya mtsho pha rol phyind[200] //
§ ye shes dbang skur[201] cod pan can //
rdzogs pa’i sangs rgyas rgyand[202] tu[203] thogs // 84

sdug bsngal gsum gyi sdug bsngal zhi //
gsum sel[204] mtha’ yas ’grol gsum thob[205] //

---

182 bcu’: cu J381; J382; Nyi; G2
183 sdug: sdu J382
184 sdug gu: skye dgu’i J112
185 slob: slobs J112; J381; J382
186 ste: te J112; J381; J382; G2
187 slob: bslobs J381; slobs J382
188 ’jigs pa myed: ’jgs myed pa J382
189 ’gond: mgon J381; J382; G2; F; Nyi
190 skyob: skyobs G2; F
191 rtend: rten J381; J382; F; Nyi
192 bcugs: gcugs J381; G2; Nyi; gcug F
193 yid bcugs pa: gsum skyon bral J382
194 mkha’: mkha’i J382; G2; F; Nyi; ka’i J381; J112
195 long: longs J112; J382; G2; F; Nyi
196 cad: chad J382
197 sgong: sgo J382; F; G2; Nyi
198 ’bed: ’byed J381; J382; G2 F
199 pa: cing J382
200 phyind: phyin J382; J112; G2
201 skur: bskur J381; J382; G2; Nyi
202 rgyand: rgyan J112; J381; J382; F; Nyi
203 tu: du J112; J381; J382; G2; F; Nyi
204 sel: seld J382
205 thob: ’thob J382

sgrib pa kun las nges par grol[206] //
mkha' ltar mnyam pa nyid la gnas // 85

§ nyon mongs dri ma kun las 'das //
dus gsum dus myed rtogs pa po //
§ sems[207] kun kyi klu chend po[208] //
yon tan thod can rnams kyi thod // 86

nyon mongs[209] kun las rnam[210] grol ba[211] //
nam mkha'i lam[212] la rab gnas pa //
§yid bzhin nor bu chen po 'chang //
khyab bdag rin chen[213] kun kyi mchog // 87

dpag bsams shing chen[214] rgyas pa ste //
bum pa bzang po che ba'i mchog //
byed pa sems can kun don byed //
phan 'dogs[215] sems can mnyen[216] gshin pa //88

§ bzang ngan shes shing dus shes la[217] //
khyab bdag dam shes dam tshig ldan //
dus shes sems can dbang don[218] shes /
§ rnam grol gsum la mkhas pa po // 89

yon tan ldan zhing yon tan shes //
chos shes bkra shis bkra' shis 'byung //
bkra shis kun kyi bkra shis pa //
grags bkra shis nyan grags === // 90

---

206 grol: 'grold J382; sgrol J381
207 sems: sems can J112; J381; G2; F; Nyi
208 sems kun kyi klu chend po: sems can kun kyi gtso bo che J112; J381; J382; G2
209 nyon mongs: lhag ma G2
210 rnam grol ba: rnam par grol F
211 nyon mongs kun las rnam grol ba: lus kun las ni rnam grol zhing J112; J381; J382
212 lam: mtha' J381; G2
213 chen: cen J112; J382
214 chen: cen J382
215 'dogs: 'dod J112; J382; G2; Nyi
216 mnyen: mnyes J381; J382; G2; Nyi; gnyes F
217 la: pa F
218 don: po G1; G2; F; Nyi

dbugs ’byin chen po dga’ ston che //
dga’ chen[219] rol mo chen po ste //
§ bkur sti[220] rim ’gro phun sum tshogs //
mchog tu dga’ ba’i grags bdag dpal // 91

mchog ldan mchog sbyin tso[221] bo === //
skyabs kyi dam pa skyabs su ’os //
’jig rten dgra’ ste rab kyi mchog //
’jigs pa ma lus seld[222] pa po // 92

§ gtsug phud[223] phud pu lcang lo can //
ral pa mun ’dza cod pan thogs //
gdong lnga zur[224] phud lnga dang ldan //
zur phud lnga pa me tog thod // 93

’go[225] zlum[226] brtul shugs[227] chen po ’chang //
tshangs par spyod pa brtul shugs[228] mchog //
dka’ thub mthar[229] ==ind dka[230] thub che //
gtsang gnas dam pa ko’u[231] ta ma //94

bram ze tshangs pa tshangs pa shes[232] //
mya ngan ’das pa tshangs pa thob //
§ grol ba[233] thard[234] pa rnam grol lus //
rnam grol zhi ba zhi ba nyid // 95

mya ngan ’das zhi mya ngan ’das /
legs par mya ngan ’das dang nye //

---

219 chen: ston J112; J381
220 sti: bsti J382
221 tso: gtso J112; J381; G2; F; Nyi
222 seld: sel J381; F; Nyi
223 phud: sud J382
224 zur: gtsud J382; gtsug J381; G2; F; Nyi
225 ’go: mgo J112; J381; J382; G2; Nyi
226 zlum: reg J382
227 shugs: zhugs J112; J382; Nyi
228 shugs: zhugs J382
229 mthar: mthard J382
230 dka: dka’ J381; J382; F; Nyi
231 ko’u: ge’u J381; J382; go’u J112; F; Nyi
232 shes: che F
233 ba: zhing J382
234 thard: thar F

bde sdug seld[235] pa[236] mthar gyurd[237] pa //
chags bral lus las 'das pa po // 96

thub pa myed pa[238] d==' myed pa //
myi mngon mi snang[239] gsal[240] byed myin[241] //
myi 'gyur kun 'gro[242] khyab pa po //
'phra zhing zag myed[243]sa bon bral // 97

rdul myed rdul bral dri ma med //
nyes pa spangs pa[244] skyon myed pa //
§ shin tu[245] sad pa[246] sad pa'i bdag //
kun shes kun rig dam pa po // 98

rnam par shes pa'i chos nyid 'das //
ye shes gnyis myed tshul 'chang ba //
rnam par rtog myed[247] lhun kyis[248] grub //
dus gsum sangs rgyas las byed pa // 99

sangs rgyas thog pa tha ma myed //
dang po'i sangs rgyas rgyu myed pa //
ye shes myig cig dri ma myed //
ye shes lus can de bzhin gshegs // 100

tshig gi dbang phyug smra ba che //
smra ba'i skyes mchog smra ba'i rgyal //
smra ba'i dam pa mchog gi gnas //
smra ba'i seng ge tshugs pa myed // 101

kun tu lta ba mchog tu dga' //
gzi'[249] brjid 'phreng ba[250] blta na sdug //

---

[235] seld: sel J381; F; Nyi
[236] pa: <u>cing</u> J382
[237] gyurd: gyur J112; F; Nyi; 'gyur J381
[238] pa: cing J112; J382
[239] snang: gsal J381
[240] gsal: snang J381
[241] mi snang gsal byed myin: <u>myi gsal snang ba myed</u> J382
[242] 'gro: <u>chub</u> J382
[243] zag myed: zag pa J112
[244] pa: shing J382; J112
[245] tu: du J381; J382; F
[246] pa: pas J382
[247] rtog myed: mi rtog G2
[248] kyis: gyi F; gyis Nyi

’od bzangs ’bar ba dpal gyi be’u[251] //
lag na[252] ’od ’bar bsnang ba po // 102

sman pa che mchog[253] tsho[254] bo ste //
zug rngu ’byin[255] pa bla na myed //
sman rnams ma lus ljond pa’i[256] shing[257] //
nad do cog gi dgra’[258] che ba // 103

sdug gu ’jig rten gsum gyi mchog //
§ dpal ldan rgyu skar dkyil ’khor can //
phyogs bcu’i nam mkha’i mthar thug par //
chos kyi rgyal mtshan legs par ’dzugs // 104

§’gro na gdugs cig[259] yangs pa ste //
byams dang snying rje’i dkyil ’khor can //[260]
dpal ldan pad ma gar gyi bdag //
khyab bdag chen po rin cen gdugs // 105

§ sangs rgyas kun kyi gzi’[261] brjid che //
sangs rgyas kun kyi sku ’chang ba //
sangs rgyas kun kyi rnal ’byor che //
sangs rgyas kun kyi bstan pa cig[262] // 106

rdo rje rin cen[263] dbang skur[264] dpal //
rin cen kun bdag dbang phyug ste //

---

249 gzi’: gzi J381; J382; G2; F; Nyi; gzig J112

250 ’phreng ba: phung po J381; J382; J112

251 be’u: bu J112; J381; J382

252 na: pa J112; J381; J382

253 che mchog: chen po J381

254 tsho: gtso J112; J381; J382; G2; F

255 ’byin: <u>dbyind</u> J382

256 pa’i: <u>shing</u> J382

257 shing: <u>ste</u> J382

258 dgra’: <u>dgrar</u> J382

259 cig: gcig F

260 <u>phyogs bcu’i nam mkha’i mthar thug par // chos kyi rgyal mtshan legs par ’dzugs // ’gro na gdugs cig yangs pa ste // byams dang snying rje’i dkyil ‘khor can //</u>: These 4 padas are missing in J382

261 gzi’: gzi J381; J382; G2; F; Nyi

262 cig: gcig J381; J382; G2; F; Nyi

263 cen: chen J381; J382; F; Nyi

264 skur: bskur J381; J382

’jig rten dbang phyug kun kyi bdag //
rdo rje ’chang ba[265] kun kyi rje // 107

§ sangs rgyas kun kyi thugs che ba //
sangs rgyas kun kyi thugs la gnas //
sangs rgyas kun kyi sku che ba //
sangs rgyas kun kyi gsung yang yin // 108

rdo rje nyi ma snang ba che //
rdo rje[266] zla ba dri myed ’od //
chags bral la sogs[267] chags pa che //
kha dog sna tshogs ’bar ba’i ’od // 109

rdo rje dkyil krung[268] rdzogs sangs rgyas[269] //
sangs rgyas ’gro ba’i chos ’dzind[270] pa //
dpal ldan sangs rgyas pad ma skyes//
kun mkhyend[271] ye shes mdzod ’dzind[272] pa // 110

rgyal po sgyu ’phrul sna tshogs ’chang[273] //
che ba sangs rgyas rig[274] sngags rgyal[275] //
rdo rje rnon po ral gri[276]che //
yi ge mchog ste rnam par[277] dag // 111

theg pa chen po’i[278] sdug bsngal gcod //
mtshon cha chen po rdo rje chos //
rdo rje zab po[279] ’dzi’[280] na ’dzig[281] //
rdorje blo gros don bzhin rig // 112

[265] chang ba: ’dzin pa J382
[266] rje: rje’i J382
[267] sogs: stsogs J382
[268] krung: krus J381
[269] rdo rje dkyil krung rdzogs sangs rgyas: rdzogs pa’i sangs rgyas rdo rje’i gdan J382
[270] ’dzind: ’dzin J381; J382; F; Nyi
[271] mkhyend: mkhyen J381; J382; F, Nyi
[272] dzind: ’dzin J381; J382; F; G1, G2; Nyi
[273] ’chang: ’dzin J382
[274] rig: rigs J381 F
[275] rgyal: ’chang J381 J382; J112; Nyi
[276] gri: gi J112; gyi J381; J382
[277] par: pa G1
[278] po’i: pos F; po J381
[279] po: mo J381; J382; J112; F; G1; Nyi
[280] ’dzi’: dzi J382; ’dzin F

pha rold[282] phyin pa kun rdzogs[283] pa //
sa rnams kun[284] kyi rgyan dang ldan //
rnam par dag pa bdag myed chos //
yang dag ye shes zla 'od bzang[285] // 113

brtson chen sgyu 'phrul dra ba ste[286] //
rgyud kun kyi ni bdag po mchog //
rdo rje[287] bdan ni ma lus ldan //
ye shes sku rnams ma lus 'chang // 114

kun tu bzang po blo gros bzang //
sa'i snying po 'gro ba 'dzind[288] //
sangs rgyas kun kyi snying po che[289] //
spruld[290] pa'i 'khor lo sna tshogs 'chang // 115

§ dngos po kun kyi rang bzhin mchog //
dngos po kund kyi rang bzhin 'dzind[291] //[292]
skye myed chos ste sna tshogs ston[293] //
chos kun ngo bo nyid 'chang ba // 116

shes rab chen po'i[294] skad cig la //
chos kun khong du chud pa 'chang[295] //
chos kun mngon par rtogs pa ste //
thub pa blo mchog 'byung po'i mtha'[296] // 117

---

281 'dzig: dzig J382
282 rold: rol J112; J381; J382; G2; F; Nyi
283 rdzogs: mchod J112; J381; J382; Nyi
284 kun: missing in J382
285 ye shes zla 'od bzang: shes zla snying gi 'od J382
286 ste: la F
287 rje: rje'i J382; G2
288 'dzind: 'dzin J112; J381 J382; F; G1; Nyi
289 che: mchog J381; J382
290 spruld: sprul F; G1; G2; Nyi
291 'dzind: 'dzin J112; J382; G2; F; Nyi
292 F inserts: so sor rtogs pa'i ye shes la stong pa'i
293 ston: don J112; J381; J382; F; G1; G2; Nyi
294 po'i: po J381; J382; F; pos G1; G2 Nyi
295 'chang: po J112; J381; J382
296 po'i mtha': po seld J112; J381; J382

myi yo[297] rab du dang ba'i bdag //
rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas[298] byang chub[299] 'chang //
sangs rgyas kun kyi mngon sum pa //
ye shes me lce 'od rab gsal // 118

'dod pa'i don grub dam pa ste //
ngan song thams cad[300] rnam sbyong ba //
'gond[301]po sems can kun kyi mchog //
sems can thams cad[302] rab grol byed // 119

nyon mongs g.yul du gcig dpa' ba //
myi shes dgra'i dregs pa 'joms //
blo ldan sgyeg[303] 'chang dpal dang ldan[304] //
bstand[305] po myi sdug gzugs 'chang ba // 120

lag pa brgya[306] po kun skyod[307] cing //
gom pa'i stobs[308] kyis[309] gar byed pa //
dpal ldan lag pa brgyas gang la //
nam mkha' khyab par gar byed pa // 121

sa'i dkyil 'khor bzhi'i khyon //
rkang pa ya cig mthild[310] kyis gnon[311] //
rkang 'theb send[312] mo'i khyond[313] kyis kyang //
tshang pa'i yul sa rtse nas gnon[314] // 122

---

[297] yo: g.yo J381; J382; G1; F; Nyi
[298] rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas: rdzogs sangs rgyas pa'i J382
[299] chub: cub J382
[300] cad: chad J382
[301] 'gond: mgon J381; J382; G1; G2; F; Nyi
[302] cad: chad J382
[303] sgyeg: sgeg F; G1; G2; Nyi
[304] blo ldan sgyeg 'chang dpal dang ldan: dpal ldan blo dang steg par ldan J112; J381; J382
[305] bstand: brtan J381; J382; G1; G2; F; Nyi
[306] brgya: brgyad J112; J381; J382
[307] skyod: bskyod J112; J381; J382; G1; G2; Nyi
[308] stobs: stabs J381; J382; F; Nyi
[309] kyis: kyi F
[310] mthild: mthil J381; J382; G1; G2; F; Nyi
[311] gnon: nond J382
[312] send: sen J381; J382; G1; G2; F; Nyi
[313] khyond: khyon J381; J382; G1; G2; F; Nyi
[314] gnon: nond J382

don cig[315] gnyis myed chos kyi don //
dam pa'i don ste[316] 'jig pa myed //
rnam rig sna tshogs gzugs don can //
sems dang rnam shes[317] rgyud dang ldan // 123

dngos don ma lus rnams la dga' //
stong pa nyid dga' 'dod chags blo //
srid pa'i 'dod chags sogs spangs pa[318] //
srid gsum dga' ba chen po pa // 124

sprin dkar dag pa bzhin du dkar //
'od bzangs stond[319] ka'i[320] zla ba'i 'od //
nyi ma 'char ka'i dkyil ltar mdzes //
sen mo'i 'od ni shas cher dmar // 125

cod pan bzang po 'thon[321] ka'i rtse //
skra mchog[322] 'thond[323] ka chen po 'chang[324] //
nor bu chen po 'od chags dpal //
sangs rgyas spruld[325] pa'i rgyan dang ldan // 126

'jig rtend[326] khams brgya[327] kun skyod pa[328] //
rdzu 'phruld rkang pa'i stobs dang ldan[329] //
de nyid dran ba[330] chen po 'chang //
dran ba[331] bzhi po'i ting 'dzind rgyal // 127
byang chub yan lag me tog spos //
de bzhin gshegs pa'i yon tan mtsho' //

---

[315] cig: gcig J112; J382; G1; G2; F; Nyi
[316] ste: te J112; J381; J382; G1; ni G2
[317] sems dang rnam shes: rnam shes sna tshogs J112; J381; J382
[318] sogs spangs pa: spangs pa ste J381; J382
[319] stond: ston J212; J381; J382; G1; G2; F; Nyi
[320] ka'i: gyi J382; J112
[321] 'thon: mthon J112; J381; J382; G2; F; Nyi
[322] mchog: <u>mdog</u> J382
[323] 'thond: mthon J112; J381; J382; G1; G2; F; Nyi
[324] 'chang: can J112; J381; J382; G1; G2; F
[325] spruld: sprul J381; G2; F; Nyi
[326] rtend: rten J381; J382; G2; F; Nyi
[327] brgya: <u>brgya</u>' J382
[328] kun skyod pa: <u>g.yo bar byed</u> J382
[329] rdzu 'phruld rkang pa'i stobs dang ldan: <u>gnod cen rdzu phrul rkang pa can</u> J382
[330] ba: pa G1; G2; F; Nyi
[331] ba: pa G1; G2; F; Nyi

lam gyi yan lag brgyad tshul rig[332] //
yang dag sangs rgyas lam rig pa // 128

sems can kun la shas tsher[333] chags //
nam mkha' lta bur chags pa myed //
sems can kun kyi yid la 'jug //
sems can kun kyi yid ltar mgyogs // 129

=== == kun kyi dbang don shes //
sems can kun kyi yid 'phrog pa //
phung po lnga don de nyid shes //
rnam dag phun po lnga 'chang ba // 130

nges 'byung kun kyi lam[334] la gnas //
nges par 'byung ba kun la mkhas //
nges 'byung kun kyi lam la gnas[335] //
nges par 'byung ba kun stond[336] pa // 131

yan lag bcu' gnyis srid rsta bton[337] //
dag pa rnam pa bcu gnyis 'chang //
bden bzhi'i tshul kyi rnams pa can //
shes pa brgyad po rtogs pa 'chang // 132

bden don rnam pa bcu gnyis ldan //
de nyid rnam pa bcu drug rig //
rnam pa nyi shus byang chub pa //
rnam par sangs rgyas kun rig mchog //[338] 133

sangs rgyas kun kyi[339] spruld pa'i sku //
bye ba dpag myed byed pa po //
skad cig thams cad mngon bar rtogs //
sems kyi skad cig don kun rig // 134
theg pa sna tshogs thabs tshul gyis[340] //
'gro ba'i don la rtog[341] pa po //

---

332 rig: rigs F
333 sher: cher J381; J382; G2; F; Nyi
334 lam: mtha' J381; J382; G1, G2; F; Nyi
335 gnas: mkhas J382
336 stond: ston J112; J381; J382; G2; F; Nyi
337 bton: btond J382
338 rnam par sangs rgyas kun rig mchog: srid pa lhur 'dzin rnam sangs rgyas J382
339 kun kyi: kyi ni J382; sangs rgyas kun kyi: dpag med sangs rgyas G2
340 gyis: gyi J381; J382

theg pa gsum gyi nges ’byung la[342] //
thegs pa cig gis ’bras bur gnas // 135

nyon mongs khams rnams dag pa’i bdag //
las[343] kyi khams rnams[344] zad ’byed pa //
chu bo’i rgya mtsho’[345] kun las rgald[346] //
sbyor ba’i dgond[347] pa las ’byung ba // 136

nyon mongs nye ba kun nyon mongs //
bag chags bcas pa rtan[348] spangs ba //
snying rje chen po shes rab thabs //
don yod ’gro ba’i don byed pa // 137

’du shes kun kyi don spangs shing //
rnam shes don ni ’gag par byed //
sems can kun yid yul dang ldan //
sems can[349] kun kyi yid[350] rig pa // 138

sems can kun kyi yid la gnas //
de dag sems dang mthun[351] bar ’jug //
sems can kun yid tshim par byed //
sems can kun kyi yid dga’ ba // 139

/ grub pa[352] mthard[353] phyind[354] ’khruld[355] pa myed //
nord[356] pa thams cad[357] rnam par spangs //

---

341 rtog: rtogs J382; G1; G2; F; Nyi
342 la: ba J382
343 las: lus J381; chos J382; J112
344 rnams: ni J112; J381; J382
345 mtsho’: mtsho J381; J382; G1; G2; F; Nyi
346 rgald: rgal J381; G2; F; Nyi
347 dgond: dgon J381; J382; G2; F; Nyi
348 rtan: gtan J112; J381; J382; G1; G2; F; Nyi
349 sems can: sangs rgyas J112; J381; J382
350 yid: thugs J381; J382
351 mthun: ’thun J112; J382; F
352 pa: pa’i J381; J382; G2
353 mthard: mthar J381; G2; F; Nyi
354 phyind: phyin J381; J382; G2; F; Nyi
355 ’khruld: ’khrul J381; G2; F; Nyi
356 nord: nor J381; J382; G2; F; Nyi
357 cad: chad J382

/ don gsum the tshom myed pa'i blo[358] //
kun don yon tan gsum gyi mchog[359] // 140

phun po lnga don dus gsum du[360] //
skad cig thams cad[361] bye brag phyed[362] //
skad cig cig[363] gis rdzogs sangs rgyas //
sangs rgyas kun kyi rang bzhin 'chang // 141

lus myed lus te lus kyi mchog //
lus kyi mtha' ni rtogs pa po //
gzugs rnams sna tshogs[364] kun du[365] ston //
nor bu chen po rin cen tog // 142[366]

sangs rgyas kun kyi[367] rtogs bya ba //
sangs rgyas byang chub[368] bla na myed //
gsang sngags las byung yi ge myed[369] //
gsang sngags chen po rigs gsum pa // 143

gsang sngags don kun skyed pa po //
thig le chen po yi ge myed //
stong pa chen po yi ge lnga[370] //
thig le stong pa yi ge brgya'[371] // 144

rnam pa kun ldan rnam pa myed //
bcu drug phyed phyed thig le can //
yan lag myed pa'i rtsis las 'das //
bsam gtan bzhi pa'i rtse mo can // 145

---

[358] don gsum the tshom myed pa'i blo: the tsom myed blo don gsum ldan J382
[359] mchog: bdag J381; J382; J212; G1; G2; F; Nyi
[360] du: pa J382
[361] cad: chad J382
[362] bye brag phyed: rtogs pa po J382
[363] cig: gcig J212; J382; F; Nyi
[364] sna tshogs: ma lus J381
[365] du: tu J382; G1; G2; F; Nyi
[366] F inserts: mnyam pa nyid kyi ye shes kyi le'u 'o //
[367] kyi: gyis J381; Nyi; kyis J382; gyi G2; F
[368] chub: cub J382
[369] J381 omits gsang sngags las byung yi ge myed
[370] lnga: med F
[371] brgya': brgya F; G1; Nyi; drug G2

bsam gtan yan lag kun shes shing //
tin 'dzind rig[372] dang rgyud rig pa //
ting 'dzin lus dang[373] lus kyi mchog //
long spyod rdzogs sku kun kyi[374] rgyal // 146

spruld[375] pa'i sku ste sku'i[376] mchog //
sangs rgyas spruld[377] pa'i rgyud 'chang ba //
phyogs bcur spruld[378] pa sna tshogs 'gyed // 147 (c)

[...]

byang chub sems dpa' sems dpa' che //
rdzu 'phruld[379] chen po 'jig rten 'das //
shes rab pha rold[380] phyind[381] pa'i mtha' //
shes rab kyi ni de nyid thob // 154

bdag rig bzhan[382] rig thams cad[383] pa //
kun la phan ba'i[384] gang zag mchog //
dper bya kun las 'das pa ste //
shes dang shes bya'i bdag po mchog // 155

tsho[385] bo chos kyi sbyin bdag ste //
phyag brgya bzhi po'i don stond[386] pa //
'gro ba'i bsnyen bkur gnas kyi mchog //
nges 'byung gsum po[387] bgrod rnams kyi // 156

don kyi dam pa rnam dag dpal //
'jig rten gsum na skal[388] bzangs che //

---

372 rig: rigs J381; J382
373 dang: can J381; J382; G1; F; te G2
374 kyi: las F
375 spruld: sprul J381; J382; G2; F; Nyi
376 'i: yi J382; G2
377 spruld: sprul J381; G2; F; Nyi
378 spruld: sprul J381; G2; F; Nyi
379 'phruld: 'phrul J381; G2, F, Nyi
380 rold: rol J381; J382; G2; F; Nyi
381 phyind: phyin J381; J382; G2; F; Nyi
382 bzhan: gzhan J381; J382; G1; F; Nyi
383 cad: chad J382
384 ba'i: ba J381; J382; pa'i F; G1; G2; Nyi
385 tsho: gtsho J381; J382; F; G1, G2; Nyi
386 stond: ston J381; J382; F; G1; G2; Nyi
387 gsum po: gnas po J381

dpal ldan ’byord[389] ba kun byed pa[390] //
’jam dpal dpal dang ldan ba’i mchog // 157[391]

mchog sbyin rdorje mchog khyod la[392] bdud //[393]
yang dag mthar[394] ’gyur[395] khyod la ’dud //
stong nyid las ’byung[396] khyod la ’dud //
sangs rgyas byang chub[397] khyod la bdud // 158

sangs rgyas chags pa khyod la ’dud //
sangs rgyas ’dod la phyag ’tshal ’dud //
sangs rgyas dgyes[398] la khyod la ’dud //
sangs rgyas rol[399] la phyag ’tshal ’dud // 159

sangs rgyas ’dzum ba[400] khyod la ’dud //
sangs rgyas bzhad la phyag ’tshal ’dud //
sangs rgyas gsung nyid khyod la ’dud //
sangs rgyas thugs la phyag ’tshal ’dud //160

myed pa las ’byung[401]khyod la ’dud //
sangs rgyas ’byung ba khyod la ’dud //[402]
nam mkha’ las ’byung khyod la ’dud //
ye shes las ’byung khyod la ’dud // 161

sgyu ’phrul[403]dra ba khyod la ’dud //
sangs rgyas rol stond[404] khyod la ’dud //

---

388 skal: skald J382; bskal G2; F
389 ’byord: ’byor J381; G2; F; Nyi
390 kun byed pa: thams chad byed J382
391 F inserts: bya ba grub pa’i ye shes la bstod pa’i ’o //
392 la: omit la J382; G1; G2; Nyi
393 mchog sbyin rdorje mchog khyod la bdud: rdo rje mchog khyod ’dud F
394 mthar: mthard J381; J382
395 ’gyur: gyurd J382
396 ’byung: byung J382; G1; G2; F; Nyi
397 chub: cub J382
398 dgyes: dges G1; F
399 rol: rold J382
400 ba: pa G1; G2; F; Nyi
401 ’byung: byung J381; J382; G1; G2; F; Nyi
402 J381 omits sangs rgyas ’byung ba khyod la ’dud//
403 ’phrul: phruld J382
404 stond: ston J381; J382; G1; G2; F; Nyi

thams cad thams cad[405] khyod la ’dud //
ye shes sku nyid khyod la ’dud // 162[406]

// AuM[407] sa r+ba d+ha rma / A ba[408] bA[409] / s+wa[410] ba[411]bA[412] / bi[413] shud d+ha / badz+ra cag kShu[414] badz+ra a aH /[415] aM aH[416] / pra kri ti pa ri shud d+ha[417] / sa rba d+ha rma[418]ya tu[419] ta / sa rba ta thA[420]ga[421] ta / gnya’[422] na ka[423] ya[424] / man ’dzu[425]sh+ri[426] / pa ri shud ti[427] ta / mu pa[428] ta[429] ye[430] ti[431] //

// a a[432] sa rba ta thA[433] ga[434] ta h+ri da ya[435] / ha ra ha ra / AuM[436] hUM[437] h+ri[438] / ba[439] ga ban[440] / gnya’[441] na mur ti[442] / ba ki[443] sh+wa ra / ma ha[444] pa[445] tsa / sa rba == ga ga na[446] / = ma la[447] / su pa ri shud d+ha[448] / d+har rma[449]d+har tu[450] gnya’[451] na / gar ba[452]A[453] //

---

405 cad: chad J382

406 F adds: ye shes lnga’i sgo nas rigs lnga la bstod pa’i le’u // (J382, F and Nyi include the *anuśaṃsā*)

407 AuM: oM Nyi

408 ba: bha J381, F; G1; bhA Nyi

409 bA: bha J381; wa F; Nyi

410 s+wa: sba J381

411 ba: bha F; G1; bhA Nyi

412 bA: ba J381; F; wa Nyi

413 bi: bhi J381

414 badz+ra cag kShu: cag shu badz+ra J381; omitted in Nyi

415 a aH: A A J381; a A F; G1; Nyi

416 aH: A J381; a F

417 shud d+ha: shu da J381; shu dha F; shu d+dh+AH Nyi

418 dha rma: dar ma J381; dha rmA Nyi

419 tu: tya J381; du Nyi;

420 thA: tha J381

421 ga: ka J381

422 gnya’: dz+nyA F; G1;Nyi

423 ka: kA G1; Nyi

424 ya: yA F

425 man ’dzu : man dzu F; ma ny+dzu Nyi

426 sh+ri: shrI G1; Nyi

427 ti: dhi F; G1; d+d+hI Nyi

428 ta mu pa: tA mu pA G1; Nyi; tA mu pa’ F

429 ta: tA G1; dA Nyi

430 ye: ya Nyi

431 ti: ti a J381

432 a a: a A G1; aM aH Nyi

433 thA: tha J381

434 ga: ka J381

de nas dpal ldan rdo rje ’chang //
dga’ zhing mgu nas thal mo sbyar //
’gon po bcom ldan de bzhin gshegs //
rdzogs sangs rgyas phyag ’tshal nas // 163

de ni ’gon po gsang ba’i bdag //
lag na rdorje khro bo’i rgyal //
sna tshogs gzhan dang lhan cig tu //
gsang bstod nas na tshig ’di === // 164

---

435 ya: yA J381
436 AuM: aum J381; o G1; oM Nyi
437 hUM: hum J381;
438 h+ri: h+rIH Nyi
439 ba: bha F; G1; Nyi
440 ban: wan F; bAn G1; wAn Nyi
441 gnya’: dz+nyA F; G1; Nyi
442 mur ti: mur+tI Nyi
443 ba ki: bA kI G1; wA gI Nyi
444 ha: hA J381; G1; Nyi
445 pa: pA G1
446 na: nA Nyi
447 = ma la: A mA lA J381
448 shud d+ha: shu ta J381; shud+dha Nyi
449 d+har rma: dar mA J381; dha rma Nyi
450 d+har tu: da du J381; dha tu F; Nyi
451 gnya’: dz+nyA F; Nyi
452 gar ba: ga rba J381; gar bhe F; ga rb+ha Nyi
453 A: AH Nyi



Plate 1: The monastery of Khor chags on the bank of the river as it appeared to Giuseppe Tucci in 1935. Photograph by Eugenio Ghersi. Courtesy of Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente, Rome

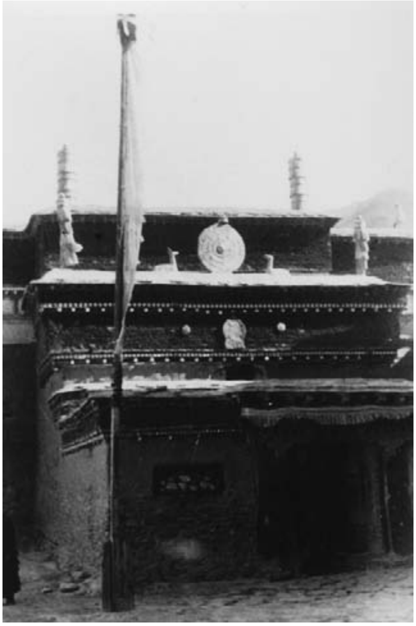
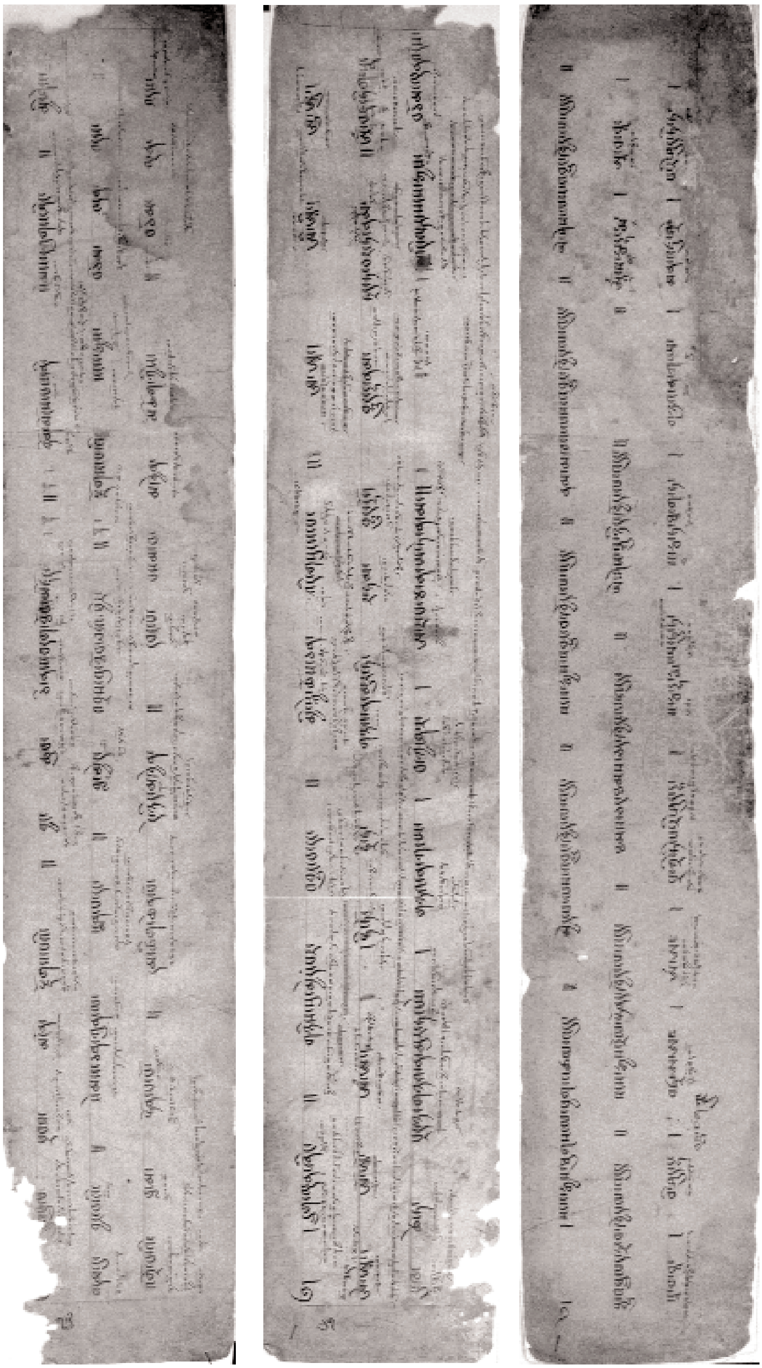


Plate 2: The Lo tsā ba'i lha khang of Khor chags. Photograph by Eugenio Ghersi, 1935. Courtesy of Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente, Rome





Plates 3 and 4: The hidden room where the manuscripts and the statues were found (photo by the author)



Plates 5, 6, 7: Examples of the MNS manuscript's fragment, found in Khor chags

PRELIMINARY REMARKS ON THE MANUSCRIPTS OF GNAS GSAR DGON PA IN NORTHERN DOLPO (NEPAL)

AMY HELLER
(CNRS PARIS, UMR 8047 'LANGUES ET CULTURES DE L'AIRE TIBÉTAINE', ASSOCIATE MEMBER)

This article will discuss data compiled from a corpus of 640 volumes of late 12th to early 16th century manuscripts conserved in Gnas gsar *dgon pa*,[1] in the small village of Bi cer, recorded on maps as Vijar, Phijor or Pijor,[2] in northern Dolpo, near the Tibetan border (Figure 1 Map). Although the village name Bi cer has been given modern 'volk' etymology as *byi bcer*, 'crushed mouse' (condensed from *byi ba*, mouse, and *bcer ba*, to squeeze, to press) this seems most unlikely.[3] In both Gro shod and in Glo, there is a town named Byi ba mkhar.[4] The signification of *mkhar* as fortress is well established, but as a town name, 'mouse fortress' seems unlikely. This implies that there may be another signification to *byi ba*, possibly local dialect of western Tibet/western Himalaya or possibly related to certain ancient Bon po deities.[5] In the dedication prefaces of the Bi cer manuscripts, the spelling is frequently *bi jer* or *bi cer,* although the actual pronunciation is much closer to 'vi che'. This may reflect instead a mixed Tibetan and

1 For a preliminary report on this library, emphasising the illuminations, and initial findings on the history of the *dgon pa*, see, Heller 2001. Here I will present subsequent findings on the manuscripts, their dedications and their history, summarising where necessary the previous data. I gratefully acknowledge constructive criticism from Giacomella Orofino and Roberto Vitali.

2 There is considerable variation in the spelling of the name of the town. Officially the spelling as written in Nepali English is Vijer; several Tibetan spellings are found in the manuscripts and village documents: Bi jer, Bi cer, Bi cher, Byi cer, Byi cher, Byi jer, Bi tse ra.

3 This etymology was explained in May 2000, by the village lama of Bi cer, Bstan 'dzin rgyal mtshan, who subsequently published this explanation in his history of Dolpo and Bi cer (see bibliography).

4 Vitali 1997: 1027 (fn. 14) calls attention to the need to differentiate between these two Byi ba mkhar. See also Everding 2000: 528 (fn. 1363) on Byi ba mkhar and the pass Byi rdo la in upper Dolpo.

5 I thank Lama Shes rab bstan 'dzin of the Bon po monastery Bsam gling, near Bi cer village, for discussion on this possible Bon po etymology.

Sanskrit etymology.[6] If *bi* is the Tibetan rendition of the Sanskrit *vi*, this could suggest a short form of Sanskrit *vihara*, sanctuary, combined with a short form of Tibetan *che ba* or *chen po*, great, i.e. *vihara che ba,* 'the great sanctuary' which, in view of the exceptional quality and quantity of ancient books found here, might well express a religious and political status of the village in former times.[7] For now, although the etymology remains uncertain, it is clear that all these spellings do refer to one and the same village in which the Gnas gsar *dgon pa* was built.

The existence of this library has been known for some time, thanks to publications by the English Tibetologist David Snellgrove and French anthropologist Corneille Jest resulting from their visits in 1956 and 1961. Snellgrove recognised a complete set of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon in the library as well as a large gilt statue of Maitreya.[8] Jest recorded two different local traditions about these books,[9] both linking their arrival to patronage of Buddhism in Dolpo by kings of Dzumla, one of whom was Bsod nams lde alias Punyamalla, who reigned in Dzumla ca. 1336–1339, after long ruling over Pu hrang.[10] After the visits by Jest and Snellgrove, very few western travellers saw the library due to restricted tourist access to Dolpo. In 1993, as participants in the Nepal German Manuscript Preservation Project, several Dolpo monasteries presented their ancient books for microfilming. At this time, a

[6] I thank Tsuguhito Takeuchi for suggesting the idea of a mixed Sanskrit-Tibetan etymology for the name of the village.

[7] Although in some manuscripts the expression *Gnas gsar dgon pa* is found, in general one finds instead *Gnas gsar gtsug lag khang*, which does seem to better render the actual conditions of the temple. I doubt that there was ever an active monastery of live-in monks in the Tibetan sense of the term in this village; rather, monks would come to reside and make retreat or celebrate rituals, but frequently travelled. There was not the community of monks nor the residences for them, as far as I have been able to determine.

[8] Snellgrove 1961 (1989): 129.

[9] Jest 1975: 55 and 361. Kagar Rinpoche, Jest's principal informant, told him that Koleal, a king of Dzumla, was the benefactor of Shey dgon pa near Bi cer, and had given the volumes of the Tibetan canon to sixteen brothers living in Bi cer. Jest also recorded the tradition that a king of Dzumla named Bsod nams had been the benefactor of Bi cer, donating several gilt copper statues as well as this *Bka' 'gyur* and *Bstan 'gyur*. This was a gesture of gratitude. The local lama of Bi cer had saved the Dzumla population from an epidemic by celebrating a *sku rim* ritual, thus the king exempted the population from taxes for eighteen years, which provided funds to purchase the texts. Jest (1985: 90) gives the full name of the Dzumla king as Bsod nams lde.

[10] His patronage of Tibetan lamas was earlier studied by Petech 1980: 85–111, but see Vitali 1996: 463–69 for a recent and most detailed discussion of Bsod nams lde, and his reign in Pu hrang and Dzumla.

few historical documents from Pijor district were brought to lower Dolpo and were filmed, but the Gnas gsar library was not visited.[11] It remained to be established what was the proper dating and historical value of this library. This was accomplished by making a preliminary inventory of the contents during a restoration project conducted in 2000, the results of which are discussed in the present paper.

By 1999, when the Pritzker and Roncoroni families visited Gnas gsar *dgon pa* in hope of seeing the library, the books were neither visible nor accessible; the chamber was sealed by the construction of a new altar. Aware of the potentially great historic significance of the manuscripts in this sanctuary, and the need for a full reconstruction of the library and the roof, the two families agreed to embark on restoration if the necessary consensus of villagers was reached. Consequently, at the request of Lama Bstan 'dzin rgyal mtshan and the inhabitants of Bi cer village, a project was formed to restore the library and monastery, to inventory and catalogue all the books, to photograph all illuminations. The initial objective of these operations was to study the illuminations for their aesthetic and iconographic content, and to establish the historic context of the entire library.

The actual restoration began in May 2000. When the wall protecting the library was demolished, 642 volumes of manuscripts and the gilt clay statue of the Buddha Maitreya appeared. In addition to the historic documents conserved in the Lama's personal library, on the shelves of the dgon pa were a group of 103 volumes identified by the lama as the *Bka' 'gyur,* several hundred *Prajñāpāramitā* volumes, as well as a few biographies and isolated volumes of *Bstan 'gyur* texts. All the books were measured, sorted by title of first text, numbered and classified by collection: N refers to Gnas gsar books (456 volumes), L refers to books from Glang *dgon pa* (98 volumes),[12] T refers to books in the personal library of Lama Bstan 'dzin rgyal mtshan (88 volumes).[13] This work was accomplished by the present writer while other team members photographed as much as possible. Manuscript illuminations

[11] Mathes (1999a: 10–11) describes the 1996 filming of historical texts and theft of manuscripts in 1997. In 1999 Mathes examined certain historical documents belonging to Lama Bstan 'dzin but did not see the library concealed behind the altar.

[12] Glang *dgon pa* is situated about an hour's walk from Bi cer; it was affiliated with Bi cer, but now is abandoned except for one lama who performs retreats there.

[13] Although this is a very rudimentary list, it will be included in the detailed publication now in press.

embellish approximately 150 manuscript leaves, on the whole in an impeccable state of conservation. Of particular interest are 61 volumes of *Prajñāpāramitā* and a few sutra volumes which have individual dedicatory texts as prefaces (*bsngo yig smon lam*). In all but a few cases, it is clear that these texts were written for their specific volume, as the dedication is placed beside the title page of the volume and the page measurements conform. In one case, it was apparent from a comparison of the calligraphy that the dedication page was written at a different time from the manuscript, something that was confirmed by radiocarbon analysis.[14] Approximately 70% of the Gnas gsar volumes lost their dedication pages over the centuries. These dedications indicate the place of copy, whether Bi cer village or neighbouring hamlets. The dedication texts state that these manuscripts were copied for Bi cer village, whether for Gnas gsar *dgon pa* or nearby Glang *dgon pa*.[15] The dedications reveal when they were made and the identity of the donors. The earliest dedications reflect 'Bri gung Bka' brgyud pa presence in the Dolpo region during the 13th century.[16] They were supported in Dolpo by the Dzumla authorities, coinciding with well known Dzumla patronage at Bodh Gaya, Lhasa Jokhang, and Gdan sa mthil.[17] There are very few Gnas gsar volumes with prefaces indicative of Bka' brgyud pa teachings. The majority of the volumes were specifically donated for Gnas gsar as it became a Sa skya *dgon pa* during the period of the Ya rtse (Dzumla) rulers Bsod nams lde/ Punyamalla and his successor Pritivimalla (ca. 1350),[18] and the early kings of the kingdom of Glo, A mgon bzang po (ca. 1450) and Bkra shis mgon (reign ca. 1460–89), as

14 This is crucial in some cases. For example, N 327, a *Prajñāpāramitā* volume, has a dedication made during the reign of the second Mustang *chos rgyal*, A mgon bzang po (reign ca. 1450). However, the text of the volume is in different handwriting throughout, and the illuminations of the frontispiece appear stylistically to have been made in an earlier time. Radio-carbon analysis gave a date range of 1287–1399 for the paper, which corresponds better to the aesthetic data. In this case it is presumed that the volume was re-dedicated.

15 At present, the lama and local people say *dgon pa* (monastery) but in the prefaces, in general, the expression Gnas gsar *gtsug lag khang* (sanctuary) is used.

16 T 32 and T 13 refer to a Bka' brgyud lineage of lamas at Gnas gsar; Mathes 1999a describes the 'Bri gung hermitages founded in the early 13th century in Dol po.

17 See *inter alia*: Vitali 1996: 454; Roerich 1976: 583 for a gift of golden roofs to Gdan sa mthil presented by the Ya rtse ruler prior to 1310; and Alsop 1994 and 1997 for the history of Khasa Malla patronage.

18 N 107 and N 188 refer to the Ya tse reign and T 17 specifies that it was made during the reign of Pritivimalla.

well as his illustrious brother Glo bo mkhan chen Bsod nams lhun grub.[19]

Radio-carbon analysis of certain pages confirms the chronological context of the manuscripts, spanning the 12th to 15th century.[20] This is of great historic importance due to the role of the Ya rtse kings as patrons of Buddhism beyond their fief in Dzumla, and in particular, the king Bsod nams lde as patron of manuscripts of the Tibetan Buddhist canon. Bsod nams lde was a Tibetan from Pu hrang who succeeded to the throne of Dzumla after long holding the throne of Pu hrang.[21] He was a strong patron of Bu ston (1290–1364), abbot as of 1320 at Zhalu, just while Bu ston was preparing his manuscript catalogue and edition of the Tibetan Buddhist canon.[22] We know in fact from historical sources that as he acceded to the throne of the Ya rtse kingdom in Dzumla ca. 1336, he had commissioned a copy of *Bka*' '*gyur* and *Bstan* '*gyur* compiled by Bu ston, one copy of which was placed at Khojarnath, on the Tibet-Nepal border south of Kailash.[23] It remains to be determined if certain volumes of the *Bka' 'gyur* texts at Gnas gsar may be part of another copy of texts commissioned by Bsod nams lde from Bu ston at this time. In view of the fact that certain volumes in Gnas gsar are attributed in their dedications to the period under the power of the Ya rtse kingdom (*chos rgyal dri myed ya tse rgyal po'i mnga'*),[24] it may well be that there is a factual basis for the local Dolpo tradition attributing the gift of *Bka' 'gyur* to Gnas gsar to the patronage of Bsod nams lde.

The Buddhist manuscripts conserved in Gnas gsar require further research to determine their situation in relation to the history of the editions of *Bka' 'gyur* in western Tibet and the Himalaya. Yet already their dedications reveal data relating to political history, trade routes, eco-

[19] L 02, L 13, L 26, L 36, L37, L49, L 56, L 64, L 67, L 78, N 07, N 239, were all written during the reign of Bkra shis mgon; L 64 dedication situates the date as the reign of Bkra shis mgon, and describes the Gnas gsar *gtsug lag khang*, its statue of the Buddha Maitreya, wall paintings and the *bka' 'gyur* and *bstan 'gyur* inside the sanctuary, all extant prior to the dedication of the text.

[20] These results will be discussed in detail in my forthcoming book on the Gnas gsar library, provisionally titled *Treasures of Dolpo: Tibetan Manuscripts and Statues of the Nepal Himalayas*.

[21] Vitali 1996: 463–69.

[22] Vitali 1996a: 18.

[23] Vitali 1996: 454–55.

[24] This is a quotation from the dedication of N 188, *'Bum* vol. Ka; in N 107 *'Bum* vol. Ga, the attribution to Ya rtse reads: *dri med chos rgyal ya tse rgyal po'i mnga'*.

nomic history, Buddhist liturgy and cosmology. The illuminations inform us about Buddhist and Hindu iconography, as well as aspects of temple architecture. Certain aspects are specific to Dolpo and the village of Bi cer, but in many respects this data pertains to a broader geographic context, due to the relations maintained by the inhabitants of Bi cer with their neighbours in the Pu hrang region of western Tibet, as well as their neighbours in Mustang (Glo) and the Ya rtse kingdom of Dzumla. The map (Figure 1) shows the location of the village of Gnas gsar in the village of Bi cer. In terms of distance, calculating travel by horse or foot, Bi cer is situated approximately 10–15 days from Kailash; 19–22 days from Sa skya; while in closer proximity, the immediate neighbours of Dzumla, at six to 10 days travel, and a mere six days from the southern and western zone of Mustang (Glo). All these places are mentioned in connection with Gnas gsar according to the data in the dedication prefaces and historical manuscripts. In particular, the prefaces of several volumes of manuscripts include religious geographies which situate Gnas gsar in relation to Tibet, India, China, and Stag gzigs (Persia/ Iran). This type of preface bears a distinct resemblance to prefaces found in late 16th century manuscripts from Ta bo (Spiti), which implies that this literary model has much earlier antecedents, and that such prefaces may be part of a western Tibetan literary tradition.[25] Cristina Scherrer-Schaub has studied the relation of certain early manuscripts conserved in Ta bo and determined their close relation with literary formulae in edicts and texts from central Tibet.[26] The implication is that the central Tibetan models of literary and administrative language persisted for successive generations, long after the descendants of the Spu rgyal dynasty settled in Mnga' ris during the late ninth century. Elena de Rossi Filibeck recently published research on dedication pages of manuscripts from Ta bo, in which she described specific characteristics of some late 16th century dedications, made during the reign of Tshe dbang rnam rgyal (1575–1595). The Ta bo dedications systematically comprise (1) opening phrases of homage to the Buddha, leading to (2) a description in broad geographic context then (3) the name of the specific place of copy, (4) the authorities governing that specific place, (5) the donor who commissioned the work, (6) the title of the work, concluding with (7) a list of the present offering. Several of the

[25] De Rossi Filibeck 2001.
[26] Scherrer-Schaub 2002.

prefaces of the Gnas gsar manuscripts exactly follow this literary model, while others change the order of the passages or omit some of them entirely. In some cases, the donor names are very numerous and there is no mention of government officials. Other prefaces add completely different information which is most precious—such as the scribes' names and place of residence, numerous names of donors and their clans, place of residence sometimes in a village five days distant from Gnas gsar (Ring mo village at Phug gsum mdo lake; Nam gung village, two days walk southeast). The economics of the manuscript commissions are also discussed in an historical document and some prefaces: the precise amounts paid by several different families for the copy of the manuscript, calculated in units of bushels of grain or a local bread *bra'u* (bitter buckwheat cakes), 10 of which might be the amount donated by a given family; also there are donor names which indicate female head of household, confirmed by ancient local tax registers still in possession of the lama of Bi cer village.[27] In addition, some dedications include the local gods (*pho lha*) as part of the sacred Buddhist geography, simultaneously situating Bi cer in relation to the 'great' lands of Tibet, India, China, Shambala and Iran as well as in the local geographic context of four mountains and the lake of the village gods. One preface from ca. 1460 situates Bi cer village both in relation to the great rivers of Nepal and to the renowned Crystal Glacier Mountain, Shel gyi gangs ri, thus documenting its sacred status at this time.[28] In addition, in one case a nun was the principal donor[29] of a volume, while many times the donors were local lamas as well as village or district headmen (*mi dpon, gru gtso*). The comparison of the names of certain donor lamas with the *bla ma'i brgyud* of the Gnas gsar *dgon pa* permits a clear framework for dating many volumes, as does the repetition of

[27] Grain donations to the monastery are described in *Mkhan po 'jam dbyangs gi lo rgyus,* composed during the reign of Bsod nams lde, ca. 1330–1340 A.D. Lama Bstan 'dzin rgyal mtshan kindly provided a copy of this tax register: among the 34 taxpaying households of the village, Phyin rin dkar ma dbang mo was 17th in rank of wealth, contributing 2 bushels of grain of buckwheat and 4 containers of *bra'u* breads. This document is undated but according to Lama Bstan 'dzin it corresponds to the period of Glo influence in Bi cer.

[28] L 02, a *Prajñāpāramitā* volume commissioned during the reign of Bkra shis mgon. Here the Crystal Mountain is described as an auspicious site near Bi cer , but it is not qualified as a pilgrimage site.

[29] L 01, a *Prajñāpāramitā* volume commissioned during the reign of Bkra shis mgon. See Schaeffer 2004 for the biography of a 17th century Dolpo nun.

certain scribes' names. Comparison of clan names reveals activities of Dol po people outside of Dol po. For example, the Shud kye family is one of the principal donor families in the Bi cer manuscripts having commissioned at least ten dedications during the period of Ya rtse patronage and Glo bo patronage.[30] The disciple and biographer of Dbyil ston Khyung rgod rtsal (born in 1235) was a member of this family named Dol po Shud kye drang mgon Rgyal mtshan tshul khrims, who traveled from Dol po to seek teachings in the vicinity of Kailash where he met Dbyil ston.[31]

Historical manuscripts which had also been conserved in this library provide data about the stages of construction of the sanctuary, which may be summarised as follows:

The initial foundation of the sanctuary took place during the late 11th century–early 12th century, confirmed by C-14 analysis of a sample of wood from a pillar (date 1045–1150 A.D. 100% range).

In the 13th century, the sanctuary was renamed as Gnas gsar, and reconsecrated under this name, in the context of 'Bri gung influence in the local region.[32]

---

[30] N 107, N 108, N 171, N 188, N239, N306, N 314, N 354, N361, N 455. One must bear in mind that many volumes' prefaces are no longer extant, thus this family may have commissioned other volumes as well.

[31] Vitali (in press) discusses the biography dictated by Khyung rgod rtsal to his disciple.

[32] The document Chags rabs: *Byi gcer yul gyi chags rabs mdor bsdus tsam gcig brjod pa*, NGMPP Reel No. E 3017/29, 1 fol. states that the 'Bri gung pa yogin Seng ge ye shes, made a consecration ceremony and gave the name Gnas gsar. Jest (1975: 360) noted that the expression Gnas gsar pa in local Dolpo usage does not have the literal meaning of 'new place' or 'new sacred presence', but refers to pilgrimage (*gnas gsar ba*). Mathes' 1999 study proved that the villagers of Bi cer economically contributed to the upkeep of Sen ge ye shes as he meditated nearby; his biographies mention that he visited Bi cer. Thus we may suggest that the name Gnas gsar reflects the development of pilgrimage to the places where Sen ge ye shes taught and meditated. See Mathes 1999 for a discussion of Sen ge ye shes in Dolpo. Mathes in subsequent research (Mathes 2003) has literally interpreted the *chags rabs* E017/29, and attributed the initial foundation of Gnas gsar to the period of Sen ge ye shes' presence in Dolpo, ca. 1220. The radio-carbon analysis of the pillars contradicts this attribution. The full phrase reads: *byang na jo bo nub ri rong dang mdzes po rong yod pa'i sa cha de ru bla ma gtsug na rin chen gyis dgon pa btab nas de ru bzhugs pa'i dus su grub thob seng ge ye shes phebs nas khong gis dgon pa de la rab gnas mnga' gsol legs par mdzad nas dgon pa de'i mtshan la gnas gsar zer ba'i mtshan 'phul lo//* On the north, there is Jo bo Nub ri rong and Mdzes po rong and at the (centre) of this place, once Bla ma Gtsug na rin chen had founded the monastery, while he was staying in the region, Grub thob Seng ge ye shes came, made a consecration ceremony for the *dgon pa,* and to this *dgon pa* he gave the name Gnas gsar.

During the 14th century, in a context of Sa skya pa orientation, there was a major enlargement of the sanctuary due to patronage by the Ya rtse kings, with the construction reaching its present proportions of 12 pillars, the Maitreya statue, mural paintings of the Vajravali maṇḍala, as well as the donation of the volumes of the *bka' 'gyur* and *bstan 'gyur* during the reign of Bsod nams lde.[33]

Subsequently, there was patronage from the kingdom of Glo from early 15th to early 16th century. The most recent dedications are those which mention Glo bo mkhan chen Bsod nams lhun grub (1456–1532).

Dedications in the prefaces of the *Bka' 'gyur* manuscripts made during both Ya rtse and Glo bo patronage refer to the village of Bi cer as the *blon sa*, which literally means 'the minister's domain'.[34] It remains to be determined to what degree this administrative term reflects any kind of political authority within Dol po and in relation to the far away capital, whether Dzumla or Glo smon thang. As we discussed earlier, the etymology of the name Bi cer might well express the religious and political status of the village.

In terms of the prefaces, in this preliminary study of the corpus of 61 prefaces, I would like to point out that certain phrases recur so frequently that it is a reminder of the repetitive patterns of administrative language phrases recognised in Tibetan documents by the research of Dieter Schuh (Schuh 1981). For example: *sa la 'bur du*…This does not literally mean an elevated place, but rather, it is figurative and refers to the status of the town which, by virtue of the copy of the manuscripts, is distinctive, prominent, and thus 'high status' in comparison with other places.[35] In addition, there are certain characteristics which

[33] The local source of this data is the anonymous historical document entitled History of Khenpo Jamyang (*Mkhan po 'jam dbyangs gi lo rgyus*) which is contemporary with the reign of Bsod nams lde (NGMPP :L/ 651 - 9). See Heller 2001, Mathes 2003. This document explains the Sa skya orientation of the sanctuary as of the 14th century, although certain Bka' brgyud pa teachings were retained in the rituals practiced at Gnas gsar. Lama Bstan 'dzin has hand-copied the list of Gnas gsar abbots, in which Tshul khrims rdo rje immediately follows Mkhan po 'jam dbyangs in the mid-14th century, and he is called a lama of Bka' brgyud orientation in the preface to the Vinaya volume T 32 (see below).

[34] For example, *blon sa* is the administrative term found in N 354 and N 7; L 02, L 13, L 26, L 31, L 40, L 49, L 65, L 96. In text L 64 there is specific mention of Blo smon thang as the capital (*rgyal sa*) and Bi cher as the *blon sa*, where the chief of the district (*gru gtso*) lives.

[35] See also de Rossi Fillibeck 2001: 242, first line of the verso: "*mnga' ris mchog gyur spyi ti zhes bya ba 'dir/ sa la 'bur du thon pa'i rgyal sa brang khar 'dir*".

appear salient in comparison with known models which originated in Central Tibetan historical documents which were subsequently so esteemed that they were quoted in varying lengths. In this respect, the phrase 'high peaks, pure earth' *ri mtho sa gtsang* is particularly noteworthy. To my knowledge, the most ancient appearance of this phrase is found in the Dunhuang document P.T. 1286, lines 35–37, in the Tibetan chronicle, translated thus by Michael Aris:

> The centre of heaven/ This core of the earth/ This heart of the world/ Fenced round by snow mountains/ The headland of all rivers/ Where the peaks are high and the land is pure/ A country so good/ where men are born as sages and heroes/ and act according to good laws/ a land of horses ever more speedy…"[36]

Aris points out that it also appears in the contemporary Dunhuang manuscript P.T. 1290, a, line 2, and that *yul mtho sa gtsang* was a phrase which attracted Richardson in his publications. Richardson had noted this phrase on the Lhasa treaty pillar of 821/ 822 A.D., *"gangs ri mthon po'i ni dbus / chu bo chen po'i ni mgo / yul mtho sa gtsang*".[37]

This expression *ri mtho sa gtsang* appears in at least 10 documents, accompanied by specific phrases situating the context of Tibet, Spu rgyal bod kyi yul, in relation to its neighbours and the western region of Mnga' ris stod, as well as in relation to the town of Bi cer and its immediate neighbour, either the kingdom of Dzumla or Glo. The dedications which quote this phrase span the period of Ya rtse reign N 188, N 107, T 13, T 17 in mid-14th century, extending as well to the period late 15th century reign of Bkra shis mgon of Glo smon thang: N 327, N 106, N 456, L 01, L 02, L 65, L 78. Although there is variety in the wording of the geographies, this phrase *ri mtho sa gtsang spu rgyal bod kyi yul,* "high peaks pure earth, land of Tibet (Spu rgyal Bod)", is systematically 'the phrase of reference' for Tibet in the Bi cer manuscripts.

Here we quote three different presentations of the geographical situation of Bi cer to give an idea of the sacred geography in broad and local context, as well as the variety and similarities of these geographic descriptions. There is a poetic quality to these passages, visible in

[36] Aris 1998: iii. also notes that this expression appears in Rwa lo tsa ba, Kaḥ thog Tshe dbang nor bu's *Bod kyi rgyal rabs*, and Shakabpa 1976.

[37] Richardson 1985: 108–109, citing *Deb ther sngon po* (1476), fol. 107b; see Roerich: 1976: 648, and *Deb ther sngon po* 1984, vol 2: 760: "*lha sa rdo rings kyi yi ge las / 'phrul gyi lha btsan po 'od lde spu rgyal yul byung sa dong tshun chad gdung ma 'gyur bar bod kyi rgyal po chen po chen po mdzad ces pa ltar /*" in which Richardson saw a substitution for *yul mtho sa gtsang* in comparison with the treaty pillar.

their repetition of certain phrases, the rhythm of the stanza, and the frequent similes. The example of the preface from the Vinaya volume T 32 is selected because it reflects the Bka’ brgyud pa presence at Bi cer. The preface from the *Prajñāpāramitā* N 107 indicates how the Ya rtse kings’ authority in Bi cer is represented in the prefaces. The preface from *Prajñāpāramitā* N 239 is dated to the specific year 1469 during the reign of Bkra shis mgon. This text demonstrates the relationship of Bi cer with Sa skya and a broader Tibetan Buddhist geographic context as well as the local gods. It is to be noted that the inclusion of Bi cer within a larger Buddhist geo-political context is part of these geographies, although the precise name of the ruler is not always stated. The model of this sacred cosmology and geography is ultimately the cosmology of the *Abhidharmakośa*.[38]

Preface to volume of *Dul ’ba*, (*Vinayavastu*) vol. Kha, T 32

E ma ho! In the dimension similar to the vast immutable and perfect space, I bow down and praise the Blessed One (*sugata*) of the three times, who acts for the benefit of sentient beings, similar to the wish-fullfilling tree jewel, and who shines forth, endowed with the five wisdoms and the perfect characteristics. The sphere of the *dharmakāya* is the vast celestial space and equanimity, the sphere of the *saṃbhogakāya* is the exemplary qualities of bliss and accumulation of goods, the sphere of the *nirmāṇakāya* transformation body is the acts which are made for the benefit of sentient beings, and here in the centre of the Jambudvīpa, the place which is the hermitage of the glaciers, being under the sovereignty of the dharma protecting king, this unique Byi cer land of the ten virtues, and the sanctuary of Gnas gsar which is the monastery of the *siddha*. I make praise and homage to Mkhan po

[38] Soerensen 1994: 44–48 cites several cosmological descriptions.

[39] T 32: *E ma ho! ’gyur myed dri bral nam mkha’ lta bu’i ngang / ye shes lnga ldan mtshan dang dpe’ byed ’bar / nor bu dpag tsam (recte: bsam) shing ltar ’gro don mdzad/ dus gsum bde bar gshegs la phyag ’tshal bstod / chos sku’i zhing khams nam mkha’i mtha’ dang mnyam pa gcig / longs sku’i zhing khams dpe’ byed ldan pa gcig / sprul sku’i zhing khams ’gro don mdzad pa gcig / ’dzam bu gling las dbus su gyurd pa gcig / gangs can ri’i khrod na gans pas gcig / chos skyong rgyal po’i mnga’ la yod pa gcig / dge bcu ldan pa’i bzhugs yul byi cer gcig/ grub thob bdan (recte: gdan) sa gnas gsar sde (recte: bde) chen gcig / ka rgyud (recte: bka’ brgyud) rigs su khrungs pa’i skyes bu gcig // bstand pa skyong zhing bu slob dar ba gcig / ’dul ba’i chos la thugs dam mdzad pa gcig / mkhan po tshul dor de la phyag ’tshal bstod /*

Tshul rdor, the one who is born of the Bka' brgyud line, who protects the Buddhist doctrine and spreads the teachings, he who made the vow of the dharma of monastic discipline.[39]

Prajñāpāramitā, vol. Ga, N 107

…E ma ho! From the five aggregates appeared the three thousand realms, from the whirling movement by the wind, gradually the cosmic water developed. Absorbing the water the terra firma of gold developed into the shining Mount Sumeru, with the great continents and subcontinents. The best of which became Jambudvīpa, and in Jambudvīpa continent in the centre of which is India. Towards the northern direction lies the pale yellow land of snows, and on the south of the glacier mountain Kailash and of lake Manasarowar, among the four rivers on the banks of the Karnali river, in the dominion of the pure *dharmarāja* the king of Ya tse, in the district of the virtuous Dzumla [spelled here 'dzom longs], in the house called Sgang ra, the boy born in the noble and excellent family line of Pha chen shud kye //….[40]

Prajñāpāramitā, vol. Tha, N 239

Kyee ho! by the whirling of the wind lifting the fundament underneath, on the surface thus produced the maṇḍala of the water developed. On this surface of the great water, the terra firma of gold developed. On this surface the great mountain measuring 40,000 *yojana* developed.[41] The seven golden mountains were surrounded by oceans. The four continents and the 8 subcontinents developed. Kye ho! Like the 8 spokes of a wheel as underneath, and the 8 petals of the lotus, as the surface of

---

[40] *Prajñāpāramitā*, vol. Ga N 107

E ma ho! 'byung ba lnga grub pa stong gsum 'jig rten khams/ rgya ram rlung gis teg cing dbang chen rim par chags/ gser gyi sa bzhi 'dal zhing khang mnyam mdzes par bkod// ri rgyal lhun po brjid cing gling bzhi gling bran bcas// mchog tu gyurd pa 'dzam kling sogs ka'i dbus// ser skya yul gyi byang phyogs kha ba can// gangs chen ti se ma phang mtsho'i lho// chu bo bzhi 'dus phag shu chen po'i gram// dri med chos rgyal ya tse rgyal po'i mnga' // dge 'dzom longs spyod 'dzom pa'i sgang ra der/ / rigs btsun skye rgyud bzang pa pha chen shud kye 'i bu….

[41] Note that in the cosmology quoted in 1358 in the Rgyal rabs gsal ba'i me long, instead of 40,000 yojana, the great mountain measures 340,000. This implies a scribal error in the Gnas gsar preface N 239, but it might also signify a different literary model as Sorensen 1994: 45 presents several different sources.

the earth. Kye ho! On this earth the five great and especially noble lands: India, the land of Dharma which completely clears all ignorance; China, land of calculations which establish geomancy; Iran/Persia, the land of jewels, which clears all sufferings of (lack of) money; Gesar's land of war, where the hoards of the heroes vanquish; and Tibet, the high peaks and pure land of Tibet (Spu rgyal Bod). Praise to the five great lands of Jambudvīpa. Kye ho! And concerning the doctrine of the Buddha today, after remaining during 5000 years, in 110 lands of the prowess of the Buddha, having shown the way of transcending all afflictions, the calculation of years: it is 3200 years since the nirvāṇa. And this best of all years is the Earth-female-ox year (= 1469). As for the later development of the Buddha's teachings, may the Buddha's teachings be upheld and also the holy ones, the best of those who uphold the saffron (colored robe) in meditation in 1800 favorable places. Kye ho! From among the three thousand realms, the paradise of Śākyamuni, the best paradise being the southern continent Jambudvīpa, on the north direction of this continent, the realm of the land of snows, and at the heart of this realm, to the west of the Glorious Sa skya monastery, to the east of the land of Oḍḍiyana where the ḍākinīs congregate, to the south of the land of the knowledge holders which is Shambala, to the north of Bodhgaya which is the heart of the noble land (India), in the north where the sacred dharma spread to the land of Tibet, the land which became best is the land of Jambudvīpa, and at the heart of the land is Byi cer, domain of the minister. Beside the mountain Rmog po rong protected by the *lha btsan*, and at the shores of (lake) Zhi de rong protected by the Mu sman. Kye ho! As for the extent of powers of the king, he makes an oath to uphold the teachings of the Buddha, and to maintain the two laws (*chos khrims/ rgyal khrims:* religious and secular law) to eradicate all that is pernicious. Oṃ āḥ hūṃ! Sound the praises of Bkra shis mgon in Mnga' ris bstod (*sic*: stod); may he be the pinnacle of princes of our times. Kye ho! May he protect by the law of the ten virtues just as the Buddha was victorious (over Mara's demons) in the forest grove, may he be like a second Cakravartin! May he destroy all poisons! Praise of wonder to the body of the man of power and joy! Kye ho! in the good family lineage of Pha chen Shud kye, here in the happiness of the prominent Dpal Khang household. Kye ho!….[42]

[42] N 239: *kye ho / 'og bzhi (recte: gzhi) 'degs bye rgya ram rlung kyis bteg / de*

In the limited scope of this article, I will not discuss further the manuscripts in terms of paper, codicological features of composition and format of writing, archaic orthography, nor the illuminations of the Gnas gsar manuscripts and comparative mural paintings of a Sa skya lineage in Tarap, in lower Dol po, which appear to be contemporary with the period of Sa skya orientation of the Gnas gsar *dgon pa* during the 14th–15th centuries. These topics will be included in my forthcoming book on the Bi cer library and its contents of books, paintings and statues, studied in the context of cultural history of Dol po.[43] To summarise the significance of the manuscripts of Gnas gsar *dgon pa,* it is already apparent that the data from the prefaces of the Buddhist manuscripts may be fruitfully studied in both religious and historical perspectives. These manuscripts document religious doctrines and practices of Dol po from the 12th to 15th century. In addition, they help to provide a more precise understanding of the interaction between Dol po

---

stengs 'byung ba chu'i dkyil 'khor chags / de stengs dbang chen gser gyi sa gzhi chags // de stengs ri rab dpag tshad bzhi khri chags / gser gyi ri bdun rol pa'i mtsho yi bskor // gling bzhi gling 'phren bye ba phrag brgyad chags // kye ho / 'khor lo rtsibs rgyad (recte: brgyad) 'dra ba rgung gi 'og/ dab rgya pad ma 'dra ba dog sa'i steng / kye ho / sa stengs 'di la yul chen khyad 'phags lnga / ma rig mun sel rgya gar chos kyi yul / snang srid rtan la 'bebs pa rgya nag rtsis kyi yul / dngul ba'i sdug bsngal sel mdzad stag gzig nor gyi yul / dpa' bo'i dpung rnams 'joms pa ge zer dmag gi yul // ri mtho sa rtsang spu rgyal bod kyi yul / 'dzam bu gling gi yul chen lnga la stod / deng sang thub pa'i bstan pa ni / lo grangs lnga stong bar du gnas pa las / thub dbang gyad pu'i yul du rgya bcu la / mya ngan 'das tshul bstan nas lo grangs ni/ sum stong nyis rgya nyag ci 'das pa'i lo/ lo mchog gyur sa mo glang gi lo// phyin chag rgyal ba'i bstan pa ni / stong dang brgyad rgya legs par gnas pa'i 'tshams / 'tshams der ngur smrigs 'dzin pa (recte: ngur smrig (gos) rig 'dzin pa) rnams kyi mchog // bshes gnyen rnams kyang thub bstan 'dzin gyur cig // kye ho /// stong gsum nang nas sha kya rgyal po'i zhing / zhing gi mchog gyur lho'i 'dzam bu gling / gling gi byang phyogs kha ba can gyi ljongs / ljongs kyi snying po dpal ldan sa skya'i nub // mkha' 'go 'du ba u rgyal yul gyi shar / rigs ldan rgyal sa sham pa la'i lho / 'phags yul snying po rdo rje gdan gyi byang / byang du dam chos dar ba bod kyi yul / yul gyi mchog gyur lho'i 'dzam bu gling / gling gi snying po blon sa byi jer lags / lha btsan 'ches pa rmug po rong gi mgul / mu sman 'ches pa zhi rdi rong gi 'gram / kye ho / 'dzin ma'i khyon la dbang bsgyur rgyal po ni / sangs rgyas bstan pa 'degs pa'i ka chen mdzad / ma rungs rtsad spyod (read gcod) khrims gnyis bya ba 'dzin / om ah hum bkra shis mgon zhes mnga' ris bstod du grags //ding sang rgyal phran bye ba 'i gtsug na mdzes gyur cig // kye ho / rgyal byed tshal na thub dbang ji bzhin du / rnam dkar bde bcu'i khrims kyis legs skyong ba // 'khor lo sgyur ba'i rgyal po gnyis pa lags // mi srun bdug pa'i tshogs rnams tshar gcod cing // mi dbang dge lde'i sku la ngo mtshar stod // kye ho // gdung rabs bzang po pha chen shud kye'i rgyud / sa la 'bur dod dpal khang byer dga' der /

[43] This book is destined for general readership, but it is planned that the publication will include a CD with facsimile of the Gnas gsar dedication prefaces and historical documents.

and Ya rtse kingdom and the interaction between Dol po and Glo, with specific reference to Bi cer in relation to both larger polities. Still, it remains a mystery why and how the tradition of manuscript commissions and illuminations developed here.

Future research will focus on the network of political, economic and cultural relations leading to the creation of this library of manuscripts, as the dedicatory inscriptions progressively yield information on the political and sacred geography, and on both political and religious history; in terms of art history, the future analysis will also seek to establish clear differentiation of the periods and the styles of the illuminations. It is hoped that in the future, Buddhologists will eventually be able to study the *bka' 'gyur* of Gnas gsar to situate it in the context of the western Himalayan traditions of the Tibetan Buddhist canon.[44]

Bibliography

Tibetan texts

Anonymous (date uncertain). *Chags rabs: Byi gcer yul gyi chags rabs mdor bsdus tsam gcig brjod pa,* NGMPP Reel No. E 3017/29, 1 fol. (1 paragraph, no author colophon, but last sentence attributes this short composition to Lama Tshul khrims rdo rje, listed elsewhere as an Abbot of Gnas gsar in mid-14th century)

Anonymous: History of Khenpo Jamyang (*Mkhan po 'jam dbyangs gi lo rgyus*) which is contemporary with the reign of Bsod nams lde (NGMPP :L/ 651 /9); another copy is NGMPP Reel No. E 3017/27 2 fols.

Bstan 'dzin rgyal mtshan. 1997. *Hi ma la'i mnga' khongs dol po byi gcer gi lo rgyus tshangs pa'i gra dbyangs zur tsam*, handwritten xerox, 29 pages.

Bstan 'dzin rgyal mtshan.2001. *Dol po Byi gcer gnas gsar dgon dang / bla ma'i brgyud rabs kyi lo rgyus rags bsdus go bder brjod pa*.

Dmar sgom Blo gros dbang phyug (ca. 1700–1750). (Short title: *Blo gros dbang phyug gi mo la*)

—— *Rgyas 'bring bsdus gsum gyi rnam par phye ba mol gtam zab mo lo rgyus gter gyi kha byang*. 22 fols. Photographed at Bi cer. (This manuscript is also recorded in the Kathmandu Archives, as NGMPP Reel No. L 731/3. 22 fols, and L1168/2 Mol gtam zab mo: 22 fols.)

—— *Rgyas 'bring bsdus gsum gyi rnam par phye ba mol gtam lo rgyus gter gyi kha byang gi 'grel lo rgyus lung rigs kyi gter mdzod*. 54 fols. NGMPP Reel no. L 543/4 and L 1175/3.

[44] Michael Zimmermann and Peter Skilling have kindly offered comments on certain texts from Gnas gsar and Glang, and the preliminary inventory made in May 2000 by the present writer. Zimmerman's initial analysis of one text has now been published as an appendix in Mathes 2003. Helmut Eimer has already offered much constructive criticism towards understanding the position of the Gnas gsar material as an intermediary phase between the Phu brag and Glo *Bka' 'gyur* edited during the visit of Ngor chen ca. 1536. I would like to thank all of them for their help and considerate attention to these manuscripts.

—— *Dmar sgom bla ma bstod pa.* NGMPP Reel no. L 1185/5. 69 fols.

’Gos lo tsa ba (1476/8 ?) (repr. 1984). *Deb ther sngon po*. Shi khrung dpe mdzod khang (no place name listed).

Texts in the library of Gnas gsar dgon pa:

T 13 *’Dul ba* A, historical frontespiece, 273 fol., 66.5 x 19.9 cm.
T 17 *Prajñāpāramitā*, vol. Pa, 334 fol., 65 x 20.5 cm. donor Bsod rin btsan
T 32 *’Dul ba*, Kha, 319 fol., 64.2 x 21.3 cm. donor: Mkhan po Tshul rdor
N 07 *’Bum* vol A. 285 fol., 69 x 22.5 cm.
N 107 *’Bum* , vol. Ga, 313 fol. 68 x 22 cm.
N 108 *’Bum*, vol.Ka, 315 fol. 22.6 x 67 cm.
N 171 *’Bum*, vol A. 341 fol., 67 x 22.6 cm,
N 188 *’Bum*, vol. Ka, ca. 305 fol, 67.8 x 22.6 cm.
N 239 *’Bum*, vol. Tha, 348 fol., 68 x 22.5 cm.
N 306 *’Bum*, vol. Ka, 226 fol. 65.5 x 22 cm.
N 314 *’Bum*, vol. Na, 379 fol., 68 x 22 cm.
N 327 *’Bum*, vol. Nga, 342 fol., 66 x 20 cm.
N 354 *’Bum*, vol. Pa, 352 fol., 68 x 24 cm.
N 361 *’Bum*, vol. Da, 320 fol., 68.5 x 21.4 cm.
N 455 *’Bum*, vol. Pa, 268 fol., 67.5 x 21.5 cm.
L01 ’Phags pa bskal pa bzang po. vol. Ka, 386 fol., 60 x 20.2 cm.
L02 ’Phags pa bskal pa bzang po. vol. Ka, 366 fol., 65 x 21 cm.
scribe: dKon mchog ’od zer.
L13 *mDo*, vol. Za, Lha thams cad kyi mdo. 341 fol., 66.5 x 20.
L26 *mDo*, vol Da, Nyi ma’i snying po. 330 fol, 65 x 21 cm.
L36 *mDo*, vol Nga, Khye’u bzhi’i ting nge ’dzin. scribe: Ne lung ’od byung, 309 fol., 65 x 21 cm.
L37 *mDo*, vol. Dza, ’Phags pa dga’ ba can gyi mdo. 313 fol., 65 x 20.4, donors Nyi lung ’od dzin dang Ni ’gu ru spun rnams.
L49 *mDo*, vol Ca, Bkra shis brgyad pa’i mdo. 308 fol., 62.7 x 21 cm.
L56 *mDo*, vol. La, Gong po la sogs pa’i rtog pa brjod pa. 317 fol., scribe: ’Gro ’gon shes, 66.4 x 21.3 cm.
L64 *mDo*, vol. Nya, Za ma tog bkod pa. 300 fol., 68 . 20,5 cm. donor: Gru rtso Yab sras, reign: Mnga’ ris rgyal po Bkra’ ’gon
L67 *mDo*, vol. Ra, Las brgya pa’i mdo. Donor: bla ma Byang chub shes gnyen. 336 fol., 67 x 22.4 cm.
L78 *mDo*, vol Na, Dus pa chen po mdo, 286 fol., 65 x 20.

Published References

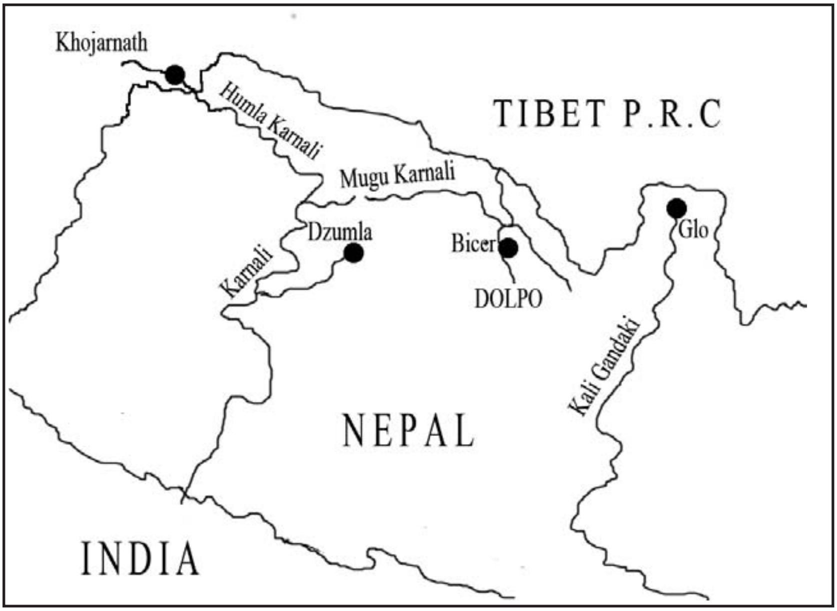
Alsop, I. 1994. The metal sculpture of the Khasa Malla kingdom. *Orientations* 25/6, 61–68.

—— 1997. Metal sculpture of the Khasa Mallas. *In* J. Casey Singer and P. Denwood (eds), *Tibetan Art Towards a Definition of Style*. London: Laurence King Publishing, 68–79.

Aris, M.V. 1998. Editor’s introduction. *In* H.E. Richardson, *High Peaks, Pure Earth*, London: Serindia, iii–xiii.

Everding, K.-H. 2000. *Das Königreich Mang yul Gung thang*. Vols. 1–2. Sankt Augustin: VGH Wissenschaftsverlag.

Heller, A. 2001. Terma of Dolpo: the secret library of Pijor. *Orientations* 32/10, 54–71.
Jest, C. 1975. *Dolpo: Communautés de langue tibétaine au Népal.* Paris: Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique.
Jest, C. 1985. *La Turquoise de vie. Un pèlerinage tibétain*. Paris: A.M. Métailié .
Mathes, K.-D (1999). Bericht über die NGMPP-Expedition nach Mugu und Dolpo 1.6.–18.7. unpublished report of the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project. Kathmandu and Hamburg, 1–17.
—— 1999a. The sacred crystal mountain in Dolpo: beliefs and pure visions of Himalayan pilgrims and yogis. *Journal of the Nepal Research Centre* 11, 61–86.
—— 2003. Establishing the succession of the Sakya lamas of Näsar gompa and Lang gompa in Dolpo (Nepal). *WZKS* 47, 85–108.
Petech, L. 1978. The ’Bri gung pa sect in western Tibet and Ladakh. *In* Ligeti L. (ed.) *Proceedings of the Csoma de Koros Memorial Symposium*. Budapest 1978, 313–25 (repr.in L. Petech. Selected papers on Asian history, *SOR LX*, 1988).
—— 1980. Ya-ts’e, Gu-ge, Pu-rang: a new study. *CA J*, 24, 85–111 (repr. in L. Petech. Selected papers on Asian history, *SOR LX*, 1988).
Richardson, H.E. 1985. *A Corpus of Early Tibetan Inscriptions.* London: Royal Asiatic Society.
Roerich, G.N. 1976. *The Blue Annals* (edited translation of ’Gos lo tsa ba’s Deb ther sngon po). Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
de Rossi Filibeck, E. 1988. *Two Tibetan Guide Books to Ti se and La phyi*. Bonn: VGH Wissenschaftsverlag.
—— 2001. Due Fogli Manoscritti da Tabo conservati nel Fondo Tucci. *In* R. Torella (ed.) *Le Parole e i Marmi.* Roma: Istituto Italiano per l’Africa e l’Oriente, SOR XCII/1, 237–45.
Schaeffer, K. 2004. *Himalayan Hermitess*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Scherrer-Schaub, C. 2002. Enacting words. A diplomatic analysis of the imperial decrees (*bkas bcad*) and their application in the *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* tradition. *JIABS* 25(1–2), 263–340.
Schuh, D. 1981. Tibetische Handschriften und Blockdrucke Teil 8. Wiesbaden , VOHD XI, 8.
Snellgrove, D. 1961. *Himalayan Pilgrimage.* London: Cassirer.
—— 1967. *Four Lamas of Dolpo*. London: Cassirer. (repr. Kathmandu, 1992)
Soerensen, P. 1994. *The Mirror of Royal Genealogies.* Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
Vitali, R. 1996. *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang.* Dharamsala: Tho.gling gtsug. lag.khang lo gcig.stong. ’khor.ba’i rjes dran mdzad.sgo’i go.sgrig tshogs.chung.
—— 1996a. Introduction. *In* R. Vitali (ed.) *Jo bo rin po che dngul sku mched gsum rten brten par bcas pa’i dkar chag rab dga’ glu dbyangs.* Dharamsala: Tho.gling gtsug. lag.khang lo gcig.stong. ’khor.ba’i rjes dran mdzad.sgo’i go.sgrig tshogs.chung.
—— 1997. Nomads of Byang and Mnga’-ris-smad: a historical overview of their interaction in Gro-shod, ’Brong-pa, Glo-bo and Gung-thang from the 11th to the 15th century. *In* H. Krasser *et al.* (eds) *Tibetan Studies.* Wien: Verlag der Österreichistchen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2, 1023–36.
—— (1998) Accounts of the journey to the ‘western regions’ with particular reference to Khyung rgod rtsal and his *’das log* experience. An historical view. Paper presented at the IATS 9, Bloomington.
Zimmermann, M. 2003. Appendix: A preliminary analysis of the *Tathāgatagarbhasūtra* as found in the Lang-Kanjur. *In* K.-D. Mathes, Establishing the succession of the Sakya lamas of Näsar gompa and Lang gompa in Dolpo (Nepal). *WZKS* 47, 104–105.



Map: Dolpo and surrounding areas

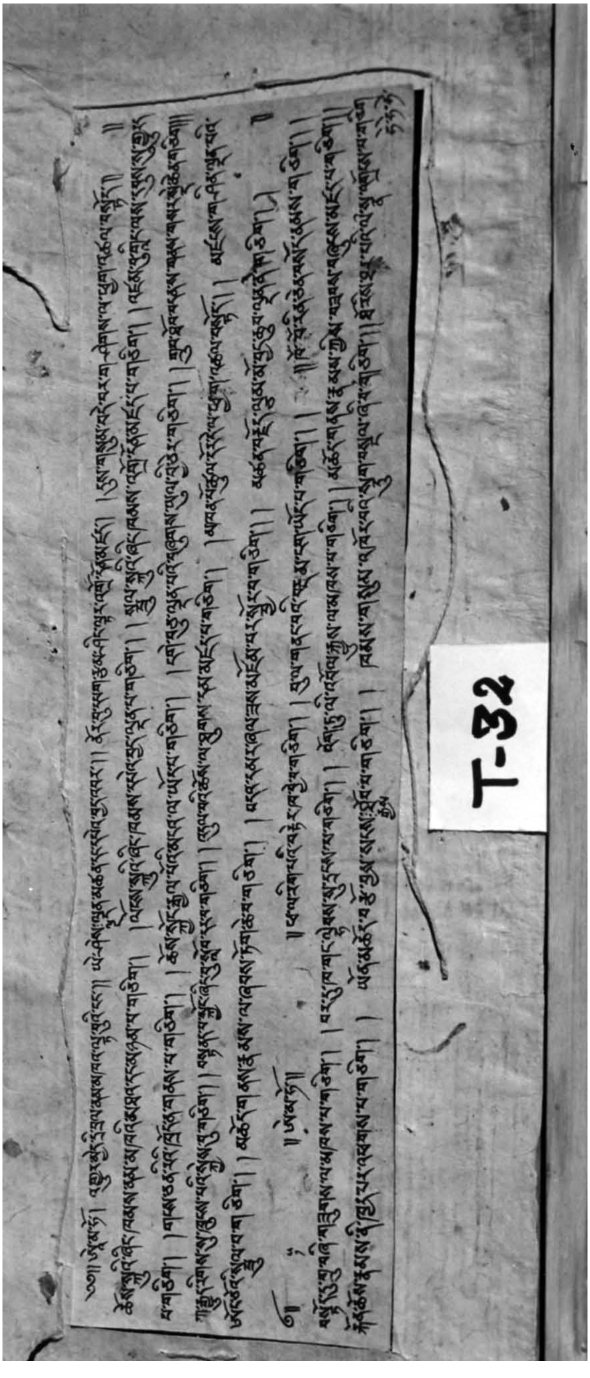


Plate 1: T 32, 'Dul ba, vol. Kha,, 64.2 x 21.3 cm., preface page of volume. Photograph by Maya Roncoroni, May 2000

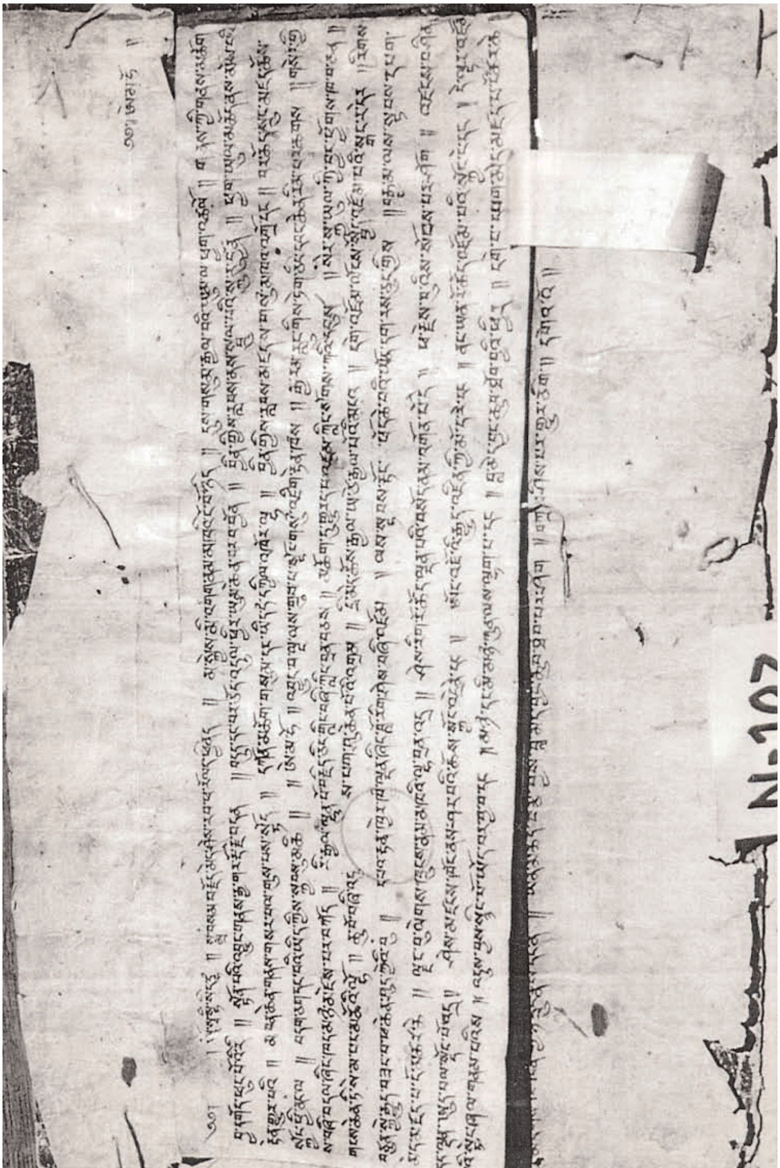


Plate 2: N 107, ’Bum, vol. Ga, 68 x 22 cm., preface page of volume. Photograph by Maya Roncoroni, May 2000

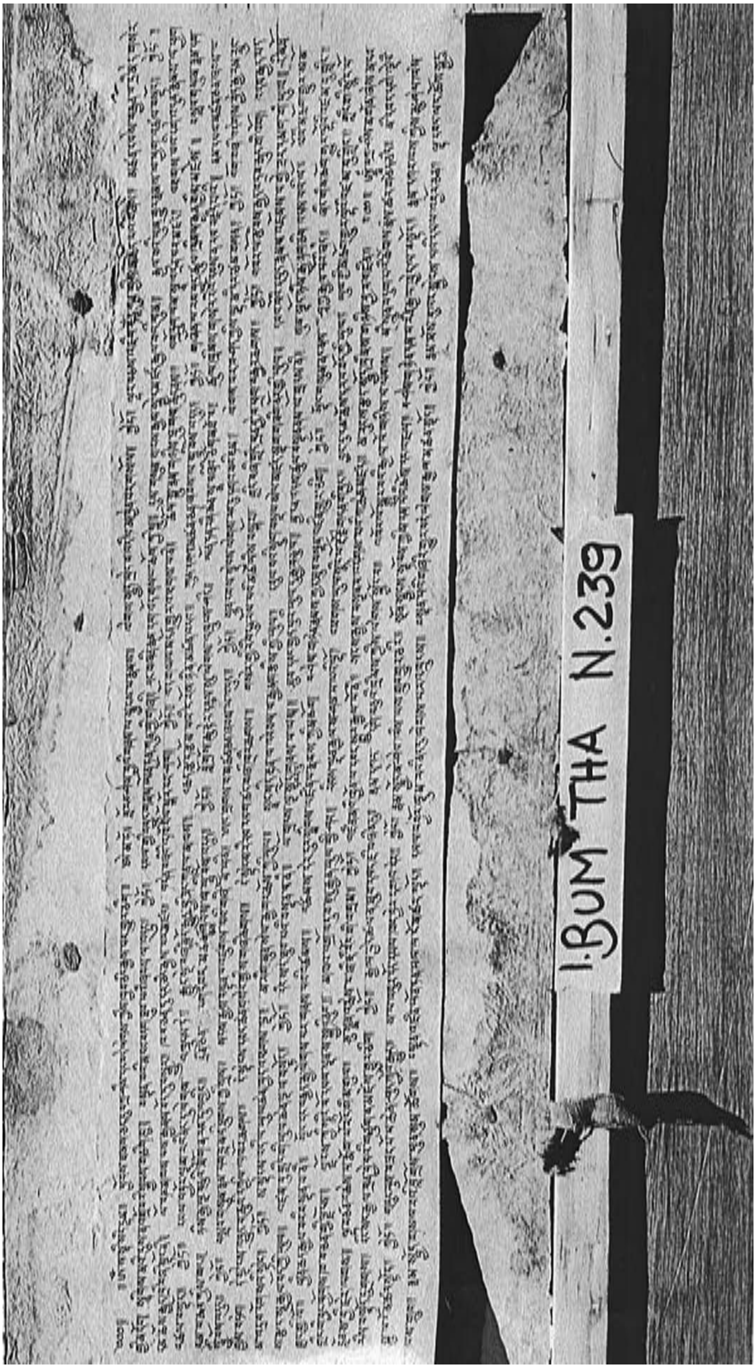


Plate 3: N 239, 'Bum, vol. Tha, 68 x 22.5 cm., preface page of volume. Photograph by Maya Roncoroni, May 2000

POETICAL PREFACES OF MANUSCRIPTS FROM WESTERN TIBET

ELENA DE ROSSI FILIBECK (ROME)

In previous research, the present writer has evaluated the contents of prefaces found at the beginning of certain western Tibetan manuscripts.

First, in *Ta bo Studies II*,[1] I described and analysed the frontspiece of a complete manuscript of the 'Sutra of the Golden light' indicating its particularities. In addition, in a publication dedicated to Prof. Raniero Gnoli,[2] I studied two manuscript sheets containing a preface to a lost manuscript. Together with these two sheets, there is a small similar group of manuscript leaves kept in the Tucci Fund, which were catalogued as 'Introductory praise or preface sheet to lost manuscript' in my catalogue of the Tucci Tibetan Fund, volume II.[3] Thus, here as a complement to this previous research my aim is to re-evaluate prefaces of this kind which are all from western Tibet, in terms of their contents and the formal aspect of their presentation.

First of all, let us recall the value of substantial historical data which may be found in this literary genre. Secondly, it is important to note the formal aspect of these sheets: the dedicatory poem is always placed in the first internal page. It is double, being cut along all the edges except the upper one. The frontspiece consists of a folded page and its reverse bears the incipit of the manuscript copy.[4.]

Tucci was the first to collect and publish some dedicatory sheets in his Indo-Tibetica.[5] He analysed them in an attempt to discover the historic names of rulers of western Tibet as well as the correct orthogra-

---

1 See de Rossi Filibeck 1999a.

2 See de Rossi Filibeck 2001.

3 The numbers of the preface-sheets examined here correspond to those in de Rossi Filibeck 2003: 259(No.485B/3), 432(No.1300), 433(No.1312) 461(Nos.1491-1492-1493-1494-1495). It is to note that the incipit of the biography of Rin chen bzang po, see de Rossi Filibeck 2003: 330, n.654, is very similar. I have not included it here because it is missing information about donors, places and time.

4 See the photograph of this manuscript in de Rossi Filibeck 2001: 239–40, *foglio* C and D.

5 Tucci 1935: 177–79.

phy of geographical names of these regions. In one of his most famous books, written together with Captain Ghersi,[6] Tucci reported the discovery of a preface sheet to a lost manuscript in Ma yang (Miang of the maps). Now, this sheet is catalogued under the number 1491 in the Tucci collection catalogue. Francke too noted some tablets containing what he described as a national anthem or choral composition which is very similar in its style to that of the dedicatory sheets edited by Tucci. He too quoted them as a potential historical source.[7.]

The reader should note the same distinctive phrasing and arrangement in the preface sheet or dedication poem relevant to La ri, edited and translated by H. Tauscher.[8] He wrote:

> …from a technical point of view this poem might not be perfect, it certainly has its own charm. Here, however, is not the place to judge its literary and artistic values. Its significance lies in the fact that it is the only example of its kind that has survived in the Ta bo Kanjur. It represents a piece of local poetry and might as such even be of some interest to those engaged in the study of Tibetan fine arts, but also provides information of historical, cultural and maybe even social relevance.

While I agree with his statement, in my opinion the expression 'piece of local poetry' seems too narrow, if related only to the La ri region. In fact, considering my study on all the preface sheets kept in the Tucci Tibetan Fund and adding Tauscher's La ri dedicatory poem as well as Francke's texts, it appears that the geographical area where these kind of dedicatory sheets were widespread comprises all of western Tibet and not only the Ta bo/ La ri region (i.e. *Spyi ti).* Furthermore, these dedications present similarities of form and contents.

While it is difficult to explain to which particular pattern their material feature was to be attributed, it is easier to understand their poetical style and their phrasing as well as the reason why they were written down. In western Tibet the survival of some concepts of the ancient Tibetan monarchy was strong. The recurrence of the phrase "May the helmet (*dbu rmog*) of the king…be high and may his dominion (*chab srid*) spread far", used to indicate the name of the incumbent ruler of the place where the copy was made, is the same in many official

---

6 Tucci & Ghersi 1934: 176–81.

7 Francke 1914, part II: 275.

8 Tauscher 1999: 230.

Ladakhi inscriptions.[9] Also the conventional description of Tibet goes back to the poetical phrasing found in the Tun huang manuscripts. It is worth noting that the paper inscriptions on the north wall of the 'Du khang in Ta bo gtsug lag khang also belong to this literary genre.[10.]

The historical information found in dedicatory poems of this sort is reliable, even if related with micro-history or local history. If we consider the studies of Francke, Tucci and Petech on the history of western Tibet, we realise the correspondence between their historical findings and the historical data found in these poetical prefaces. When we read in these prefaces the names of 'Phags pa lha (no. 1495), 'Jig rten dbang 'phyug (no. 1312) or Seng ge rnam rgyal (no. 1491), we read names of historical personages chronologically related to the period of the copy of the manuscripts.

The most important consequence is that the manuscripts with this kind of preface can be dated. The dedicatory poems of this sort can provide further information. First, the mention of the places where a copy was made shows that in those places there were active sites where believers and donors could fulfil one of the best duties for a Buddhist. Second, the titles of the copied texts relate the textual transmission concerning the context of making copies as a devotional practice for benefit of future life of donor himself/herself, for giving thanks to his/her parents and so on. Information concerning social life tells us that a large number of donors were women and that they were from different places.

In terms of their contents, we note the same distinctive manner of arranging topics in seven successive phases: 1) The initial clause always contains praise to Buddha and to faith in the Law. Then we find 2) a general and 3) a particular description of the place where the copy has been made, followed by 4) a mention of the ruler of the place, and 5) the name of the donor or donors of the copy are to be found, as well as 6) the title of the copied work and 7) a list of the offerings.

The translation of these sheets was difficult due to spelling mistakes. The following mark: (…) shows that there are illegible words, in the texts.Before giving the complete transliteration and translation of the preface sheets I will give a short summary of each.

---

9 Petech 1977: 153–54.

10 de Rossi Filibeck 1999: 195–97.

No. 1491

In this preface to a lost manuscript, the king Seng ge rnam rgyal (1616–1642) and Ma yang, the place under his dominion, are mentioned. The ruler is the well-known Ladakhi king who conquered Guge in 1630.[11] In 1933 Tucci visited Ma yang where he found this sheet in a *mchod rten*, thanks to the indication of a lama who lived there. The important information of this sheet is the correct spelling of Ma yang, a place located south of Ta bo. The preface is incomplete: we know only the initial syllable of the donor's name Tshe and his family name or lineage called brgya/rgya. Brgya may possibly refer to Rgya , on the border between Ladakh and Rupshu. The lines of the sheet alternate black and red ink. The initial *mgo yig* is double.[12]

No. 1492–1493

These numbers refer to the sheets I edited and translated in 2001. I recall here only the names of the *sa skyong* Tshe dbang rnam rgyal (fl. 1575–1595), of Ga ga Bum lde and of Ta bo chos 'khor. It is worth noting how the phrasing of the above mentioned are so similar with the phrasing of a paper inscription found on the north wall of the 'Du khang in the Ta bo gtsug lag khang.[13] The initial *mgo yig* is double and the mirror is marked by a red line.

No. 1494

This sheet is the same Tucci edited and translated the first six lines in Indo-Tibetica.[14]·In this poetical preface we find mention of a lost manuscript copy of *Dam chos khyad 'phags bde mchog*,[15] as well as of Kva rtse, the famous family place of Rin chen bzang po. At that time it was ruled by Lha sras Nyi ma'i dbang phyug khri lde and his brother (c. 1600).[16] Thanks to this preface Tucci was able to locate Kva rtse in Gu ge. The initial *mgo yig* is double and the red line which delimits the written space (i.e. mirror) is quite visible.

[11] Petech 1977: 41–5.

[12] See photo no. 1491 and cf. the various shapes of *mgo yig* in Scherrer-Schaub 1999: 25.

[13] See note 10.

[14] See Tucci 1935: 8–9, 177.

[15] Unidentified text.

[16] Petech 1988: 389.

No. 1495

This sheet is a very small written in golden letters on a black paper. The initial *mgo yig* is double. It is interesting to find the definition Bod yul zal mo rgang (referential) to western Tibet: *zhang zhung ljongs 'dir bod yul zal mo rgang*. We know two Zal mo sgang located in 'Phan yul and in A mdo.[17] The ruler of Bkra shis sgang dkar, south of Ta bo, near Shipki, was Dpal ldan 'Phags pa lde (ca. 1500).[18] Three other sheets belong to this kind of literary genre. Contrary to the previously discussed prefaces, these three are prefaces of extant manuscripts in the Tucci collection. They are catalogued as follows: 485b/3, 1300, 1312.

No. 485b/3

This preface sheet contains a dedicatory poem to a manuscript of a non canonical work, under the title: *Bcom ldan 'das dpal kun bzang zhi khro rab 'jam gyi lha tshogs kyi dngos bshags bcom ldan*. It is a Rnying ma pa text concerning five main points of deliverance through extinction of karma as revealed by Padmasambhava together with rites for the irate and peaceful *lha tshogs* of Kun tu bzang po and belonging to the Rning ma pa literary cycle of the Naraka dong sprugs.[19] In this poetical preface, Sarahan (*So ra rang*), the ancient capital of Bashahr is mentioned as the place of copy of the manuscript. The chronology of the manuscript is during the reign of a king named Sing (or Sid) dpal and his minister Tshe dbang dpal 'byor. In this preface there is a long list of donors: they are from Mu ru mkhar (Mu ru mkhar po che in the text). This place is located in Do shal area, near Tho gling.[20] According to Francke, all the Bashahr rajahs are called by the dynastic name Sing /Simha , since the 16th century.[21] So, in this case it is difficult to date the manuscript. I can only note that there is no evidence of the old palaeographic and orthographic style. The initial *mgo yig* is double and the mirror is marked by a red line.

---

17 Sørensen 1994: 112 note 297, 340–41.

18 Petech 1988: 388.

19 On some examples of this kind of literature, see de Rossi Filibeck 2003: 218, and Tachikawa 1983: notes 3639, 3797, 3798.

20 Vitali 1996: 318 note 492.

21 Francke 1914, II: 8.

No. 1300

This preface sheet contains a dedicatory poem made for a copy of *’Phags pa ’dus pa chen po rin chen tog gi gzungs zhes bya ba theg pa’i mdo*.[22] According to the preface, the copy was made during the reign of king Skye sar sing ge of Sarahan (*So ra rang*), the ancient capital of Bashahr. In this case the king may be identified with Kehar or Kesari Sing, rajah of Bashahr, who lived during the Ladakhi-Tibetan war (1679–1683). His name is mentioned in the Namgya document found by Tucci in Kunuwar in 1933 and later edited by Petech.[23] In the Tibetan historical sources, Skye sar seng ge is remembered for the military assistance given to Dga’ ldan tshe dbang. In the Namgya document, the rajah’s name is Skyer seng. In the manuscript I have found no indications of the old palaeographic and orthographic style except for one occurrence *la stsogs pa* (32b2). The initial *mgo yig* is double and the mirror is marked by a red line.

No. 1312

This number refers to the preface sheet edited in *Ta bo Studies II*. I would like to point out the complete similarity of the first nine lines of this preface with the first eight of no. 1300. Then the two texts differ.

Texts and Translation

Transliteration No.1491

1.a

1. Oṃ sva sti si dham/ bsod nams rab rgyas rgyud bzhi’i don / ye shes chen po’i spyan gyi lags gzigs na dgra rnams smin grol lam la ’god mdzad pa’i dpal ldan bla ma’i zhabs spyi bos ’dud

2. sku bzhi’i me shel las grub dkyil ’khor rgyas / khyen rtse’i[24] yes shes ’od ser stong ldan gyi / ’khor ’das ’gro ba’i blo mun gsal mdzad pa’i / thub dbang pad ma’i gnyen la rtag tu ’dud / lung rtogs ri bong mtshan

[22] Tohoku no. 138.
[23] Petech 1988: 24–5.
[24] Read: *mkhyen brtse*.

3. ma'i cha sha rdzogs / gsung rab bcu gnyis gsil zer 'od dkar gyi / bskal ldan ku dmud phyogs bcur rgyas mdzad pa'i // dam chos mtshan ma'i mgon la rtag tu 'dud / gangs can shing rta'i

4. srol byed mi pam rje / mngon rtogs rig pa'i dbang phyug rgyal tshab rje / mtshungs med yab sras gsum la gus phyag 'tshal / thub rtan[25] lha'i lam la legs gyur cing / stan[26] 'dzin mkha' gro dbang po kun gi rje

5. blo gros 'dab chag rgyas pa'i dpal mnga' ba'i // dpal ldan bla ma'i zhabs la spyi bos 'dud // mang mtho[27] rgyan gyi rab mdzes gzhonu yi ku // legs shad chos dgra zab mo sgrog pa'i gsung /

6. mkhyen rtse'i 'od zer phyogs bcur ma 'phro ba'i thugs / dpal ldan bla ma'i zhabs la gus phyag 'tshal / ston pa'i gnos bstan pa 'dzin skyong pa la / dag pa'i sar zhugs 'gro ba'i don la brtson // rang gzhan

7. byang chub lam la mgod mdzad pa'i / theg chen dge 'dun rnams la rtag tu 'dud / kye lags ston pa'i zhing khams mi 'jed 'dzam bu'i gling/ rab dkar gang ri'i 'phreng bas kun nas bkor//

8. yan lag brgyad ldan nyal 'gro ltung ltung sgrog / nor 'dzin phyogs g.yu'i gos gyon cing / 'dab chags rkang drug snyan pa'i glu len pa'i // rtsi bcud 'bru rnams dus su smin byed pa'i / dge

9. bcu khrims gnyis ldan pa'i mnga' ris 'dir/ kye lags / mi thun phyogs rnams 'jom shing 'khor 'bangs skyong // kun gyi ldem 'bru mdzes shing 'khur ba'i 'os / sa kyong chen po chos rgyal seng ge

10. mnam[28] rgyal sa khong la bstod / de'i chab srid yang pa 'dir / rgyal ba lung stan[29] chos kyong bzhugs pa'i gnas rgyun chad med pa chos kyi dgra sgrogs shing // khas mang 'dus shing dge 'dun bzhugs pa'i

11. gnas // khyad par yul la dge bcu mdzom pa'i g.yang yul ma yang 'dir / phu na lha gnyan tho dang rtsan[30] / mdo na brag ri mdzes dang gnyi / 'dun na dge bcu mdzom dang sum// de gsum

12. mdzom pa'i g.yang ya lags / mi rigs khung rus chen brgya'i rgyud tshe

[25] Read: *bstan*.
[26] Read: *bstan*.
[27] Read: *mang thos rab ma*.
[28] Read: *rnam*.
[29] Read: *bstan*.
[30] Uncertain reading.

Translation No. 1491

Oṃ, Happiness! Reverence to the glorious lama who completely liberated the enemies by his perception and knowledge of the essential meaning of the four meritorious tantras.

Reverence to Buddha who illuminates the darkness of mind of the creatures living in the saṃsāra, endowed with the light of the supreme knowledge spreading the flaming crystal maṇḍala of the four bodies.

Reverence to the Lord endowed with the signs of the holy doctrine who spreads out in the ten directions, the blessed lotus shimmering with the white light of the twelve branches of the scriptures, perfected as a full moon with authoritative scriptures (*lung*) and realisation (*rtogs*).

Reverence to the three incomparable father and sons, the moderator of the chariot of Tibet and Rgyal tshab rje, the lord of knowledge of revelation.

Reverence to the glorious lama who possesses the glory of spreading the wisdom of the master of the *ḍāka*s, upholder of teaching, progressing on the divine path of the Buddha teaching.

Reverence to the glorious lama, whose young body is ornate with the ornaments of *bāhuśruta*, whose speech resounds with deep discourse on the dharma and elegant sayings (*subaśita*), whose mind diffuses in the ten directions the light of the supreme knowledge.

Reverence to the saṃgha of the Mahāyāna who establish on the path of liberation themselves and the others, who exert themselves in order to let the creatures enter the pure land, who maintain, protect and diffuse the received transmission of the Master's teaching.

Kye lags! In this Jambudvīpa (world of enduring suffering) realm of the teacher, surrounded from all sides by a chain of most white snowy mountains in which the rivers of the eight branches tumble down and resound, wearing turquoise robe on all sides, in which birds and bees sing a song of glory which cause to ripen in due time the fruit trees, resin trees and corn, in this Mnga' ris endowed with the ten virtues and the two good rules.

Kye lags! He who protects the subjects and defeats the enemies, who is suitable for the respect of all[31], may he be praised, the great protector of the earth, the religious king Seng ge rnam rgyal!

---

[31] Tib. *ldem 'bru*: it is an unknown compound in dictionaries. I owe the meaning of the sentence to Jampa Panglung Rinpoche.

In this wide dominion of his, in this Ma yang, happy place where the ten virtues convene, dwelling place of the saṃgha, who make the vow of proclaiming the dharma unceasingly, dwelling place of the protectors of the dharma texts and commentaries of the Victorious.

In the upper valley, the cairns of the *lha* and *gnyan*, one, in the lower valley, the beautiful mountain, two, in front, the gathering point of the ten virtues, three, it is a wide land which gathers in itself these three. Of the family of Rgya,[32] a noble lineage and great clan, Tshe....

No. 1492–1493

These numbers refer to the preface sheets translated in de Rossi Filibeck (2001).

Transliteration No. 1494

1a

1. Om sva sti siddham / don gnyis mthar phyin ston pa sangs rgyas dang // sgrib gnyis mun sel skyob pa dam pa'i chos// rigs grol

2. gnyis ldan 'phags pa'i dge 'dun ste // slu med dkon mchogsum (sic) la 'phyag 'tshal lo // snod kyi 'jig rten 'byung ba bzhi la rten // bcud kyi sems

3. can 'od gsal lha nas 'chad // ga'u kha sbyor gnam sa gnyis kyi bar // ri mtho sa gtsang spu rgyal bod kyi yul // kha ba can ljongs dam chos dar

4. ba'i sa // dgra bcom bzhugs nas ti se gangs kyi mgul // chu bo 'ga' ga 'bab pa'i g.yon phyogs 'dir // lha sras nyi ma'i dbang phyug khri lde yi//

5. sku mched skye dgu'i gtsug na rgyal gyur cig // chos rgyal mnga' 'og zhang zhung yul gyi dbus // dge bcu 'dzom pa'i lha yul khva rtse 'dir // mi rigs

6. khung btsun khri btsan rgyud du khrungs // chos dang chos min 'byed pa'i shes rab dang // zhing dang zhing min shes pa'i blo gros kyis // lugs dang

7. lugs gnyis so sor rab phye nas // snying nas snying po dam pa thob bya'i phyir // bsod nams bsags pas dal 'byor mi lus thob // stan pa'i

8. bzhin bdag tshe dbang bas 'grub dang // 'byam yangs lasvags (*sic*)

[32] On this place, see Vitali 1996: 123.

khum btsan spun rnams kyis // rang gi sngon bsags sgrib pa sbyong ba dang //

9. ’di phyi yi don chen brtse ba’i bsam pa bsgrubs // a khu drung pa rin po che’i dgongs pa rdzogs phyir du // dam chos khyad ’phags

10. bde mchog nyu bzhengs // bsags pa chos phyir brdzong ba ngo mtshar che // gang de yon gyi bdag mo zhes pa ni // ne btsun dam pa lha dbang

11. sgrol ma (…..) // bsung[33] rab ’di la ’bad pa rjes yid rang // yon mchod rtso[34] byas ’gro drug sems can rnams //

1b

1. sangs rgyas thob pa’i rgyu ru bsngo // mang ga lam

Translation no. 1494

Om, happiness! Reverence to the infallible three Jewels: the Buddha, supreme master of the twofold benefit,[35] the holy *dharma*, which removes the twofold mental darkness, the noble *saṃgha* endowed with twofold liberation.

The inanimate nature was supported by the four material elements and the sentient beings were born from the divine clear light, between heaven and hearth, joined like a *ga’u*,[36] in the pure land of Spu rgyal Bod, the snowy land of the high mountains, country of the spread of the holy dharma, dwelling place of the arhats.

On this side of river Ganges, may the *lha sras* Nyi ma’i dbang phyug Khri lde and his brother reign on all the creatures! Inside the Zhang zhung land, under the religious king, in this Kva rtse of the divine land where the ten virtues convene, he/one was born in the Khri btsan lineage, a noble offspring.

With his knowledge which differentiates *dharma* and *adharma*, and with his mind which recognises *kṣetra* and *akṣetra*, he discriminates individually the two systems.

In order to obtain the holy essence from the essence, he accumulated merits and obtained an human body. The relatives, Khum btsan such

[33] Read: *gsung*.

[34] Read: *gtso*.

[35] I follow Tucci’s translation of don gnyis/twofold benefit. This term could refer also to *bden pa gnyis*: the two truths, conventional and ultimate.

[36] On this votive and ornamental box see Tucci & Ghersi 1934: 27, 131, 257.

as the faithful followers of the teaching, Tshe dbang bsam ’grub and ’Byam yangs, have purified their own mental darkness accumulated in former times and carried out the desire of enjoying the great light thereafter.

In order to fulfill the wish of A ku drung pa rin po che, they dedicated a little Dam chos khyad ’phags bde mchog.

It is a wonder how they donated the collected offerings for the benefit of the doctrine. As to the donor Ne btsun dam pa lha dbang sgrol ma, (…) she was happy to personally practice this text.

May all the creatures, beginning with the donors and the officiating priest, be blessed and may they reach Buddhahood.

Maṅgalaṃ! May be auspicious!

Transliteration no. 1495

1a

1. // Om sva sti si dham / gang sku mtshan dpe’i dpal ’bar rgyas pas gdul bya ’i yid gyi re ba skong byed // gang gsungs yan lag drug bcu’i sgra yis ’gro blo’i mun pa drungs nas ’byin / gang thugs gnyis med ting ’dzin mchog gis mthar ’dod longs[37] la gzigs pa ’jug //

2. sngon med thub dbang lnga yi lha mchog sha kya’i rgyal po de la ’dud // dri ma kun bral thub dbang skyabs kyi mchog // ’gro blo’i mun sel lung rtogs dam pa’i chos // ’tshogs mchog mchod par ’os pa dge ’dun te // bla med gsum la gus pas phyag ’tshal lo //

3. dus gsum rgyal ba kun gyi gdung ’dzin mchog / nam yang mkha’ mnyam ’gro la dmigs pa dang // rgya chen bsod nams ’tsho las legs ’khrungs[38] pa’i / zung ’jug rdo rje ’dzin pa de la ’dud / e ma ho // gling gi mchog gyur lho yi ’dzam bu gling /

4. bstan pa’i ’byung gnas bod yul zal mo rgang / ’jig rten dbang po’i sti gnas te se mchog / thub dbang zhabs kyis bcags pa’i ma dros mtsho // ’dza’ hu’i bu mo yan lag brgyad ldan ’gram // dge bcu ’dzom pa’i zhang zhung ljongs ’dir na /

5. dge ba bcu yi khrims kyis ’dzin ma’i mkhyon[39] // skyong mkhas sa bdag dpal ldan ’phags pa lha // skye dgu’i gtsun na sku mched rgyal gyur gcig // chos rgyal mnga’ ’og yul la dge bcu ’dzom // bde ba’i ’byung gnas dga’ ldan lha yul ’dra

[37] Uncertain reading.

[38] Uncertain reading.

[39] *Mkhyon* is an unknown word in dictionaries, the meaning could be :*’dzin ma’i ’dzin* ruler, as in Roerich (1986: 27).

6. brgya pa'i gnas mchog bkra shis rgang dkar du // mi rigs 'khungs btsun mang wer seng spyan rgyud // blo gros ldan pas rje yi thugs brnyes mdzad // tshangs spyod ldan pas khyim pa'i tshul 'dzin cing // bsod nams ldan pas dal 'byol[40]

7. mi lus thob // lhag bsam dag pas dam pa'i chos la mos // zas nor 'dzom pas phyi nang skyong la mkhas // sbyin dang bdag po namkha' (*sic*) chos skyong gis // 'gro drug pha mar shes pa'i lhag bsam dang // khyad par rgyug mo'i don du bsams nas

8. mi / 'thun pa'i dge ba rnams kyang legs sbyar ro / gang de khyim gyi bdag mo zhes pa ni // rogs bzang 'khungs btsun khva tse g.yu khri'i rgyud // bud med lus la g.yo rgyur[41] spangs shing / dal 'byor ldan pa'i mi lus rin chen

9. thob // lhag bsam dag pas dkon mchog mchod la brtson // chos la yongs pa 'dul ba'i lam la gus // bsod pa'i rgyud 'dzin 'phrul gyi bu mo 'dra sbyin pa'i bdag mo dkon mchog skyong gis yab yum thugs dgongs

1b

1. rdzogs par bya phyir dang // khyad par ma yi drin lan bsam phyir du // sgyu ma'i nor la snying po blangs nas ni / rgyud kyi rgyal po ngan song sbyong pa'i rgyud // rin chen rgya las sngon med 'di bzhengs so // gzhan yang dge

2. ba'i rtsa ba la // 'bad bstshol med par bsgrub pa dang // mchod gnas brnyes pa'i zhabs tog la // skyo nges med pa ngo mtshar che // gnyen bskor ljon shing lo 'dab ltar // rab tu brgyas pa rnams kyis

3. kyang // dka' ru dge 'dogs byas pa dang // gzhan yang phan pa'i bgyi ba gang // de dag kun kyang sbyin pa'i bdag po dang // lhan cig dge ba'i bya ba 'grub gyur cig // 'di yi dge bas mar gyur

4. 'gro ba kun // rnam snang chen po'i go 'phang myur thob shog // gzhan yang 'di'i dge bas yon mchod gtso byas 'gro drug sems can rnams bla med rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas myur thob shog // maṅgalaṃ

Translation No.1495

Oṃ, happiness! Reverence to the king of Śākya, the principal deity of the five primordial Buddhas, whose body, that fully manifests the noble Buddha signs, produces the blissful state of the mind of disciples,

40 Read: *'byor*.

41 Read: *sgyu*.

whose speech removes the mental darkness of the creatures with the sound of the sixty branches of sermons, whose mind, by the excellent non dualistic meditation allows the vision of the attainment of the final aspiration[42].

Reverence to the three Incomparable ones (i.e.) the excellent refuge of Buddha who removes all the defilements, the holy doctrine of *Dharma* by which it is possible to examine the spiritual exhortation for removing the darkness from the mind of the creatures, the *saṃgha* which is suitable to receive the collected offerings.

Reverence to the superior Vaṃśadhāra of all the Jina of the three times, Yuganaddha Vajradhāra well grown by immeasurable merits, always thinking for the benefit of the creatures, as vast as the space of the sky.

E ma ho! Marvellous! In this place of Zhang zhung where the ten virtues convene, shore of eight branches of the 'Dzam bu tree (*'dza' hu'i bu mo*),[43] lake Ma dros, a place where Buddha did walk, Ti se, superior meditation place of Lokeśvara, Tibet Zal mo rgang, place of diffusion of the doctrine in the south continent, may the protector, wise lord Dpal ldan 'Phags pa Lha, reign on all the creatures, thanks to the rules of the ten virtues.

At Bkra shis rgang dkar, the best place of one hundred, similar to a joyful, divine place under the rule of the dharma king, where the ten virtues convene, the laymen (*mang wer*) Seng spyan[44] of noble family, being wise and generous, assuming the form of a pure and kind householder, obtained a precious human body.

With superior and pure devotion for the holy doctrine, he is rich and skilled in taking care of friends and extraneous persons. The donor Nam mkha', having been a defender of the doctrine and having thought for the benefit of the six classes of beings, of the parents, and particularly for the benefit of his mother-in-law[45] also wrote (*legs sbyar ba*) *Mi 'thun pa'i dge ba rnams*.[46]

---

42 Uncertain reading.

43 Read: *'dzam bu* (*vṛṣksa*): it is the tree with eight branches located in the centre of Lake Ma pham; see Namkhai Norbu & Prats 1989: 111.

44 The donor's name contains the following Zhang zhung words: *mang wer*, layman, see Haarh 1968: 37. The personal names mentioned in the texts are different from the usual Tibetan onomasticon, on which see Lindegger 1976.

45 *Rgyug mo*; Roerich 1984: 264.

46 Unidentified text.

As to the lady of the house, Rogs bzang ’khungs btsun of the lineage of Kva rtse g.yu khri, giving up the deception of a female body, obtained a precious human fully endowed body.[47.]

With pure intention, devoted herself in the worship of the *triratna* and venerated the path which conquers all for the doctrine.

In order to fulfil the wish of the parents and particularly to return their kindness, the donor, a very good daughter, took full advantage of wealth and instituted an unprecedented copy of the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra* (*Rgyud kyi rgyal po ngan song sbyong ba’i rgyud*).[48]

Furthermore, it is a wonder how she realised fundamental virtues without trouble and how she rendered service of worship without weariness!

A large number of friends and assistants, so many as leaves of trees, did penance and did always good actions, may all of them, together with the donor, realise virtuous deeds!

By this virtue, may all the creatures be regarded as a mother and obtain the rank of Vairocana quickly!

By this virtue, may all sentient beings, beginning with the officiating priest and the donor, obtain at once the state of the Unsuperseded Perfect Buddha (*bla na med rdzogs pa’i sangs rgyas*).

Transliteration no. 485 B

Bcom ldan ’das dpal kun tu bzang po dang zhi khro rab ’jam gyi lha tshogs kyi dngos bshags

1a

1. Om sva sti sid dham / dpal ’byor bsod nams sku gsum nor bu mdzes // mkhyen pa’i ’od zer

mkha’ ltar yangs pa las//dgos ’dod kun ’byung nor bu yis // dus gsum bla ma

2. rnams la phyag ’tshal lo //kye legs chos sku nam mkha’ ’dra ste kun la khyab// dam chos

bdud rtsi ’dra ste kun la mdzes // skyabs gnas dkon mchog gsum la phyag ’tshal lo//kye legs dgung sngon

[47] The meaning of this sentence could be that the donor will obtain a male human body in a future life.

[48] Tohoku, no. 483.

3. bkod legs bhe du rya'i 'dra'i 'og // sa gzhi gdal legs padma 'dab brgyad stengs // ga'u kha sbyor gnam sa gnyis kyi bar // dgra bcom bzhugs gnas ti se gangs kyi nub//dngos grub 'byung gnas

4. ma bang (i.e.ma pham) mtsho'i gram // kye gling bzhi'i mchog gyur lho'i 'dzam bu gling // kha ba can ljongs dam chos dar ba'i sa // ri mtho sa gtsang spu rgyal bod kyi yul // gu ge zhang zhung lho'i 'dzam bu gling du /

5. dpal 'byor bsod nams bsags pa mi lus rin cen[49] thob // dad pa rnam smin las la yid ces nas // sngon gsags dge ba'i 'bras bu las rten nas // dge ba'i dam chos 'di bsam 'grub pa yin //

6. kye legs lha dbang pho brang mtshungs 'dra rgyal sa so ra rang na// rgyal po chen po sid dpal yab sras kyis / dbur rmog btsan zhing chab srid rgya mtsho'i dpal // dga' bde brlab phreng rol pa mdzes pa'i sku //

7. chos rgyal de'i phyi'i dgra rnams 'dul zhing // nang gi 'khor 'bangs skyong// bod mon bdun stong gnyis kyi dbus na dbur rmog tho[50] // sku tshe'i rgyal mtshan bstan gyur cig // yul la dge bcu 'dzom

1b

1. pa'i mu rang mkhar po che nas // de'i rje kha rgyur ba'i khrims kyis tsho ba'i blon po rnams la bstod // kye legs phu ru rtsi thog smin cing // mdo ru 'bru bcud rgyas shing // 'dod dgu 'dzom ba

2. lha yul mu rang nas // mi rigs khung btsun ba sa ni rgyud / shes rigs gnyis dang ldan pa nang gi gnyen rnams skyong / dpa' rtsal gnyis dang ldan pa phyi'i dgra rnams 'dul // dad ldan sbyin pa'i bdag

3. po blon po tshe 'ang dpal 'byor de la bstod // no'o[51] rog se nge la bstod // lhab hrug gzho nu[52] 'dra ba'i ltar rgyal dang / nyam rtsu gnyis kyang pha ma bzhin chos la dkar bar shog // sbyin pa gtong phod che

4. bas tshong dpon bu mo 'dra/ dad ldan yon gyi bdag mo la khri dang // gna' ma 'dzangs shes gnyis dang ldan pas / rgya bra ong co[53] 'dra // dad gus che ba'i rtong nge dang // lha mo nor rgyan 'dra ba'i 'dzangs drung

---

49 Read: *chen*.

50 Read: *mtho*.

51 *No'o* for No no. I read: *No no* Rog senge; Rog is part of name as in Rog tsho rig 'dzin, see Petech 1977: 73. *No no* is the title of the local governor of Spiti; see the explanation of this term in Petech 1977: 155–56.

52 I read *lhab hrug gzho nu and lha rug gzhon nu* , see n.1300,1b, line 2, as a mistake for: *lha sras gzhon nu*, young prince; on this title see Petech 1977: 96.

53 Read: *rgya bza' kong jo*.

5. (...) khyi mug rtse gnyis la bstod // bu mo gang ’ga’ lha mo ’dra ba’i rmen drug dang / lhun ’grum ’jom dang / ho tis gsum yang pha ma’i chos dang mthun par shog // srin mo chos skyong dang /

6. blo gros gnyis / tsha bo rdzim si dang / ru pu gnyis rnams kyang la dge’u dkar ru dge la zong skur mdzad pa ngo mtshar che //// e ma ho/ rgyud lung man ngag snying po’i don rtogs nas/ skye rdzogs zung ’jug sgrub pa’i rgyal

7. tshan[54] btsugs / chos nyid rlong na bde gsal dang la gsal / yi dam dngos grub snyes pas byin brlabs thug rjer ldan // thugs dgongs rnam dag bla ma chos kyi tshan can gis/ zas bras nor sgyu mar gzigs nas / chos la zong ba ngo

8. mtshar che[55] / rgya ba’i gsung rab na rag dong prug / bshegs ’bum[56] bzhengs / (……) tshe ’das bde ba can du khrungs par shog / dge’o / bkra shis

Translation no. 485 B

Oṃ, happiness! Reverence to the lamas of the three times who fulfil all wishes and desires with rays of the light of knowledge which is wide like the sky and embellished by the gem of the magnificent *trikāya*.

Oh well! Reverence to the *triratna*, place of refuge, to the *dharmakāya*, permeating everything with the holy doctrine which is nectar, good for all. Oh very well! Under the well ordered heaven, blue like *vaiḍūrya*, the well covered face of the earth, similar to eight petals of lotus, the intermediate space between earth and sky joined like a *ga’u*, in the west of Gangs Ti se, residence of arhats, on the shore of the lake Ma pham, place of accomplishment. Oh! In the southern continent, the best of the four continents, in land of snows, place of spreading of the holy doctrine, the high land of Spu rgyal, Tibet, in Gu ge Zhang zhung, having obtained a precious human body in which glory and merits are convened thanks to the faith in the karmic law and on the result of the past virtuous deeds, he/one (?) realised the mind of this holy doctrine.

[54] Read: *mtshan*.

[55] The sentence “*chos la zong ba ngo mtshar che*” is equivalent to “*chos phyir brdzong ba ngo mtshar che*”, cf. no. 1494, line 10.

[56] I read: copies of *Rgya ba’i gsung rab* (extensive sermons or scriptures) of *Na ra kha dong sprugs* (see note 19) and of *Bshegs ’bum*, equivalent for: *Bde bar gshegs pa ’bum or Bshags ’bum*. I don’t know if *bshegs ’bum* could refer to the cycle of *Bka’ brgyad sde bde gshegs ’dus pa*, on which see Schwieger 1995.

Kye legs! In So ra rang, the capital comparable to the palace of Lha dbang, father and son Sing dpal, who uphold the glory of the kingdom bound by the helmet of power, beautiful for the appearance of joy and happiness, conquered the enemies, took care of the people, in the middle of seven thousand Tibetan and Mon pa.

May they have a long life! In that place where the ten virtues convene, in Mu rang mkhar po, praise to the ministers who remain alive by the laws of the precious *Bka' 'gyur*. Oh well! Ripening the fruit in the upper part of the valley, spreading the grain in the lower part of the valley, from Mu rang, place of gods , praise to the minister Tshe 'ang dpal 'byor, faithful donor who annihilates enemies by bravery and dexterity, who protects friends by intelligence and knowledge, born in the noble lineage of Ba sa ni, and praise to No no Rog senge!

May Rgyal and Nyam rtsu be virtuous towards religion according to the desires of father and mother and victorious as a young prince. Praise to the faithful donors La khri, who has great daring in the distribution of gifts, like to a principal merchant, and to Gna' ma 'dzangs shes, praise to 'Dzangs drung, like the goddess who bestows great wealth, who is faithful and like the Chinese wife Kong jo, and praise to Khyi mug rtse.

May the three, Rmen drug, Lhun grub 'jom and Ho tis, like the Ganga goddess, reflect the doctrine of their parents! May Sring mo chos skyong, Blo gros, the grandson Rdzim si and Ru pu have faith in virtue.

E ma ho! After having examined the profound meaning of tantras, transmissions of teaching, precepts, the banner of victory in the accomplishment of the two stages of generation and completion was raised; having acquired a religious disposition, happiness will appear more and more clear and having obtained the siddhi of the yidam, with blessing and compassion, it is a wonder how the lama Chos kyi tshan can, having seen wealth and food as illusion, gave gifts to the benefit of doctrine and instituted copies of extensive sermons, of the hundred *Na ra kha dong sprugs* and of *bshegs 'bum*, may he reborn in the Bde ba can paradise! Virtue and happiness!

Transliteration no. 1300

1a

1. E ma ho // sku gsum bdag nyid dkon mchog rin chen rtso // mi nub bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan stan 'gyur cing // 'gro rnams mthar pa'i lam la 'god mdzad pa'i // bla med dkon mchog gsum la phyag 'tshal stod // e ma ho mi 'gyur lhun grub rdo

2. rje lta bu yi sku // gsung dbyangs 'gal khrul med pa tshangs pa'i dbyangs // dgos 'dod thams cad 'byung ba nor bu'i thugs // sku gsum mnyam par bzhag pa'i bka' cig ma // stobs ldan bdud kyi dpung rnams rab tu 'joms // rgyal ba sha kya thub la phyag 'tshal bstod

3. e ma ho // chos sku namkha'i rang bzhin dag pa la // gzugs sku gzha' mtshon lta bur rang bzhin med // sprul sku ka kha pha ma gsum bcu byon // gsal byed yi ge yi tshogs la phyag 'tshal stod / grol nas grol ba'i lam yang ston mdzad pas // bslab

4. pa dag la rab tu gus pa yi // zhing gi dam pa yon tan zhing dad ldan // dge 'dun tshogs la gus pas phyag 'tshal stod // E ma ho // rgyu sngo tho lding bai du rya'i 'dog // dog mo bkod legs pad ma mda' rgyad steng // ga'u kha sbyor gnam sa gnyis bar / bcud kyi 'gro ba 'od gsal

5. lha las chad // E ma ho // stong gsum mi 'byed lo ka tha med kyang // gling bzhi bye ba khrag rgya bskor ba'i nang // ri rgyal lhun po lho'i phyogs kyi ngos // 'dzam bu tri sha mtshon pa 'dzam bu'i gling / ri tho sa btsang spu rgyal bod kyi yul // ston pa chos gsung rdo rje gdan gyi byang

6. ba kha can ljongs dam chos dar ba'i gnas// ti se mchod rten dgra bcom bzhugs pa'i gnas // ma bang g.yu mtsho dngos grub khrus kyi rdzings // kye legs // rin chen bzang po'i zhabs kyi lcags pa'i gnas // blo bzang grags pa'i stan pa dar ba'i gnas // chu chen

7. dal 'bab blang po kha 'bab 'gram // cha'i g.yang ra zhang zhung lha'i ljongs // khyung rdzongs spu mtho rin chen lhun po'i ngos // dgos 'dod 'byung rin chen gser gyi gling // yul la dge bcu ldan pa gnas bzhi byin // mkhan slob ston pa mang ba dam chos dar // gang bsam

8. lhun grub su mthong smon gnas[57] so ra rang na // gnam sa'i bdag po rgyal po skye sar sing gi dbu rmogs rtsan zhing chab srid rgya mtsho'i dpal // dga' bde'i slabs phreng. rol ba mdzes pa'i sku // chos rgyal de'i mnga 'og na // yul la dge bcu 'dzom pa'i

[57] From this point, the text no. 1300 is different from the text no. 1312

1b

1. g.yang yul hra ’dir / mi rigs khung btsun ti la ru’i rgyud du khrungs / gzho[58] nu nyid na dkon mchog gsum la gus / dge sems gnyis dang ldan pa skyo ngal med / spa rtsal gnyis dang ldan pa phyi’i dgra rnams ’dul / shes rigs gnyis

2. dang ldan pa nang gi gnyen rnams skyong / yab kyi mchog gyur bla ma skyabs dang/ dad ldan yon gyi bdag po chos srung dang / tshe dbang don grub dang / skyabs bzang dang / sdeb bzang dang / lha rug gzhon nu ’dra’i sras kyi mchog gyur khyal su dang /

3. hor dang / gang ga lha mo ’dra’i sbyin pa’i bdag mo gtso tur dang / gna’ ma’i mchog gyur kra shis dang / bu mo kho me dang / mdzes se dang / tsha mo ma ne ’dzom dang / ’jam dbyang dang / kyi ’dzom dang / de rnams chos la dkar bar shog/

4. tshe ’dir sdig sgrib byang phyir dang / phyi ma thar lam sgrod phyir du / dam chos khyad ’phags rgya tog gser gsum dang ma ni bka’ ’bum rnams bzhengs pa ngo mtshar che ma tshe la ’das pa’i don du bzhengs / ’di bzhengs pa’i bsod nams (.. …)

5. dag pa’i zhing du skye bar shog // bu mo tshe la ’das pa’i don du bzhengs

Translation no. 1300

E ma ho! Praise and reverence to the supreme *triratna*, essence of *trikāya*, firm banner of the undying doctrine, three infallible gems which establish living creatures in the path of liberation.

E ma ho! Praise and reverence to the Buddha Śākyamuni who overpowers the great numberof powerful demons in a moment’s contemplation of the *trikāya*, (whose) body is an immutable self-created diamond, (whose) speech is a pure melody devoid of illusion and error, (whose) mind is a jewel satisfying all wishes and desires.

E ma ho! Praise and reverence to *dharmakāya*, pure nature of the sky, and to *rūpakāya*, without self, similar to a rainbow, and to *nirmāṇakāya*, sound of the alphabet, with the thirty letters complete with the vowels and consonants. Praise and reverence to the saṃgha who has the holy merits of the pious precepts and being already liberated, guides (others) on the path of liberation.

[58] Read: *gzhon*

E ma ho! Tho gling, well established little place on eight lotus petals, made of blue material, colour of *vaiḍūrya*, between sky and earth, joined like the two parts of a *ga'u*, where the inhabitans were born from clear divine light. E ma ho! In the endless world (three thousands world realms—*trisāhasrika lokadhātu*), within the four great continents, in the Jambudvīpa continent which has as symbol the 'Dzam bu tree, and is in the south side of Ri rgyal lhun po, there is Bod Spu rgyal's land of high peaks and pure earth , north of Rdo rje gdan (Vajrāsana), the place of Buddha' s teaching, snowy country where the holy doctrine was spread and where there is the mount Ti se, similar to a stūpa, abode of arhats, where there is the turquoise lake Ma pham, pond for ablution.

Kye legs! Place of the footprints of Rin chen bzang po, place of diffusion of the doctrine of Blo bzang grags pa, bank of the great river flowing from the Glang chen kha 'babs or 'elephant-mouth-shaped' (i.e Sutlej river) spring place of the divine region Cha'i g.yang ra Zhang zhung Khyung rdzong, on the side of Spu mtho rin chen lhun po, golden place like a gem, satisfying all wishes and desires; in this country which bestows blessings, permanent abode of those who possesses the ten virtues, where many religious masters spread the holy doctrine, in much longed-for So ra rang, during the reign of that dharma king, whose body in excellent health enjoys waves of happiness, glory of the kingdom, mighty ruling helmet of the king Skye sar sing, lord of the sky and of the earth, in this place of happiness where the ten virtues convene, those born to the Ti la ru noble family, at the time of their youth, with reverence to the *triratna*, who subdue enemies, showing courage, skill and constant faith, virtue and mindfullness, caring for their kinsmen with wisdom and knowledge.

Lama Skyabs, the most excellent of the fathers, the faithful donor Chos srung, Tshe dbang don grub, Skyabs bzang, Sdeb bzang, Khyal su , the most excellent of the sons, similar to the young Lha rug, Hor, the donor Gtso tur, similar to the Ganga lha mo, Kra shis, the most excellent of Gnya' ma, the daughters Kho me (and) Mdzes se, the granddaughter Ma ne 'dzom, 'Jam dbyangs and Kyi 'dzom, may all of them be virtuous towards religion!

In order to purify darkness of life and to forward on the path of liberation in future life, they instituted wonderful copies of *Dam chos*

khyad 'phags rgya tog gser gsum[59] and *Ma ni bka' 'bum*[60] for the benefit of the deceased mother.

For the benefits deriving from instituting copies, may they reborn in a pure land!

(The present copy) was made for the merit of the deceased.

No. 1312

This number refers to the preface sheet edited and translated in de Rossi Filibeck (1999a).

Bibliography

Francke, A.H. 1914–1926. *Antiquites of Indian Tibet*. Parts I–II. Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing.

Haarh, E. 1968. *The Zhang–Zhung Language. A Grammar and Dictionary of the Unexplored Language of the Tibetan Bonpos*. Acta Jutlandica XL.1. København.

Lindegger, P. 1976. *Onomasticon Tibetanum.* Opuscula Tibetana (7). Rikon: Tibet Institut.

Martin, D. 1997. *Tibetan Histories. A Bibliography of Tibetan-Language Historical Works*. London: Serindia publications.

Namkhai Norbu and R. Prats (eds) 1989. *Gangs Ti se'i dkar chag. A Bon po Story of the Sacred Mountain Ti se and the Blue Lake Ma pham.* Serie Orientale Roma LXI. Roma: IsMEO.

Petech, L. 1977. *The Kingdom of Ladakh, c.950–1842 AD*. Serie Orientale Roma LI. Roma: IsMEO.

Petech, L. 1988. *Selected Papers on Asian History*. Serie Orientale Roma LX. Roma: IsMEO.

de Rossi Filibeck, E. 1999. Later inscriptions in the Ta bo gtsug lag khang. *In* L. Petech and C. Luczanits (eds), *Inscriptions from the Ta bo main temple Texts and translations.* Serie Orientale Roma LXXXIII, Roma, 189–206.

—— 1999a. A manuscript of the 'Sutra of Golden Light' from western Tibet. *In* C.A. Scherrer-Schaub and E. Steinkellner (eds) *Ta bo Studies II, Manuscripts,Texts, inscriptions, and the Arts*. Serie Orientale Roma LXXXVII, Roma, 191–206.

—— 2001. Due fogli manoscritti da Ta bo conservati nel Fondo Tucci. *In* R.Torella (ed.) *Le Parole e i Marmi. Studi in onore di Raniero Gnoli nel suo 70° Compleanno*. Serie Orientale Roma XCII.1. Roma, 237–47.

—— 2003. Catalogue of the Tucci Tibetan Fund in the Library of IsIAO. Vol. 2 Roma.

Schwieger, P. 1995. *Tibetische Handschriften und Blockdrucke (XI, 11)*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag.

Scherrer-Schaub, C.A. 1999. Towards a methodology for the study of old Tibetan manuscripts:Dunhuang and Ta bo. *In* C.A. Scherrer-Schaub and E. Steinkellner (eds) *Ta bo Studies II, Manuscripts, Texts, Inscriptions, and the Arts*. Serie Orientale Roma LXXXVII. Roma: IsMEO, 3–36.

[59] Unidentified text.

[60] On the bibliography of this famous text dedicated to Avalokiteśvara see Martin 1997: 30.

Sørensen, P. 1994. *The Mirror Illuminating the Royal Genealogies. An Annotated Translation of the XIVth Century Tibetan Chronicle: rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Tachikawa, M. 1983–1988. *A Catalogue of the United States Library of Congress Collection of Tibetan Literature in Microfiche*. Biblographia Philologica Buddhica, Series Major. Tokyo: International Institute for Buddhist Studies.

Tauscher, H. 1999. Here in La ri, in the valley where the ten virtues convene…A poem of dedication in the Ta bo Kanjur. *In* C.A.Scherrer-Schaub and E. Steinkellner (eds) *Ta bo Studies II, Manuscripts,Texts, Inscriptions, and the Arts*. Serie Orientale Roma LXXXVII Roma: IsMEO, 227–41.

Tohoku: Hakuju Ui, Munetada Suzuki, Yensho Kanakura and Tokan Tada (eds) 1934. *A Catalogue-Index of the Tibetan Buddhist Canons (bka' 'gyur and bstan 'gyur)*. Sendai: Tohoku Imperial University.

Tucci, G. and E. Ghersi 1934. *Cronaca della missione scientifica Tucci nel Tibet Occidentale (1933)*. Roma: Reale Accademia d'Italia.

Tucci, G. 1935. *I templi del Tibet Occidentale e il loro simbolismo artistico. Parte I, Spiti e Kunavar*. Indo-Tibetica III.1. Roma.

Vitali, R. 1996. *The Kingdom of Gu.ge Pu.hrang According to mNga'.ris rgyal.rabs by Gu.ge mkhan.chen Ngag.dbang.grags*. Dharamsala: Tho ling gtsug lag khang lo gcig stong 'khor ba'i rjes dran mdzad sgo'i go sgrig tshogs chung.

Part Three: History

THE GU RU LHA KHANG AT PHYI DBANG: A MID-15TH CENTURY TEMPLE IN CENTRAL LADAKH

ERBERTO LO BUE (BOLOGNA)*

This article is meant to relate a small temple in central Ladakh to its historical and cultural environment, incidentally suggesting a possible date for its wall paintings. The temple, known as Gu ru lha khang (Pl. 1), lies at the foot of the ruined castle of Phyi dbang,[1] one of the most ancient villages in Ladakh, about 16 km west of Leh. David Snellgrove first drew my attention to those paintings in 1982 and allowed me to publish some of the pictures he had taken there (Lo Bue 1985: 268–72, figs. 5–12); only much later was I able to visit the site.[2]

The estate where the Gu ru lha khang rises belongs to a local family which dwells in a nearby hamlet, apparently corresponding to the oldest part of Phyi dbang. According to its present owners (one of whose ancestors was on friendly terms with the local ruler and married a princess, whereas another, *ga ga*—cf. Petech 1977: 156—Ga sha, purchased the estate including the land on which the temple rises from a scion of the royal family apparently in the 1950s) the ancient name of the temple is 'Slob dpon de vi', *slob dpon* being the Tibetan translation of Padmasambhava's Indian title, *ācarya*; three clay images, the largest

* This paper, delivered at St Hugh's College in the autumn of 2003, is dedicated to the memory of my father, Dr Francesco Singleton Lo Bue, on the fiftieth anniversary of his stay at Mansfield College in Oxford, where he prepared his thesis, *The Turin Fragments of Tyconius' Commentary on Revelation*, for publication at Cambridge University Press (1963).

[1] The castle is depicted on the northern wall of the lantern in the *tshogs khang* of the monastery of Phyi dbang, perhaps as it stood when the assembly hall was decorated (late 1550s early 1560s) and before the castle itself was dismantled to use its material for the construction of the Slel chen Dpal mkhar, the nine-storeyed palace built at Leh presumably in the late 1630s (Howard 1989: 250) by order of King Seng ge rnam rgyal (c. 1570–1642).

[2] In 2001, 2002 and 2003, during fieldwork funded by the University of Bologna. The pictures illustrating this article were taken by Laura Jokisaari, Olaf Czaja, Luciano Monticelli and Chiara Bellini, whom I thank for their permission to publish them; I also thank the family owning the temple, in particular Don grub rnam rgyal—*dge tshul* at the monastery of Phyi dbang—and his brother Tshe ring nor bu Ga sha as well as the latter's wife Tshe ring dbyangs sgrol, for their assistance and for granting permission to take pictures.

one portraying Gu ru Rin po che, are placed on the altar erected by the owners of the temple. Other temples, unfortunately in ruins, rise on the crags in the vicinity of the Gu ru lha khang; in 2003 I climbed to one locally known as Chu bhi,[3] a few hundred yards south of the former, only to find traces of white and red pigments on its walls: the roof had entirely collapsed.

A plate outside the entrance of the Gu ru lha khang records that roof repairs were carried out under the sponsorship of an officer and his wife in 1998, probably as part of a programme whereby the Indian army has been encouraged to 'adopt' endangered monuments in Ladakh. A short and low passage gives access to the inside of the temple, which has a square plan measuring about 5.20 x 4.95 metres;[4] I shall not deal here with its architecture and problems of conservation, which have been studied in recent years by a team of researchers including Christian Luczanits, Wolfgang Heusgen, Gerald Kozicz and a couple of conservationists who carried out restoration tests on its paintings.

The inner walls are entirely painted, except for their lowest section, with rectangular panels including the main religious images with their retinues, and surrounded by smaller panels and registers housing smaller figures. A similar subdivision of spaces may be found at other sites in Ladakh, for example in cave temple No. 3 and at Sa spo la or at A lci, both in the Lha khang so ma of the Chos 'khor and in the two temples surviving in the neglected *dgon pa* giving its name to the hamlet south of the Chos 'khor;[5] as in those temples and as in the Śākyamuni

---

[3] Mentioned by Dkon mchog rnam rgyal (1998: 44). Other temples in the area are listed in the same source on the following page: Jo mo'i lha khang; Lcang ma can gyi lha khang, Chu 'go'i lha khang.

[4] The temple measures 2.90 m from the ground level up to the main beams and about 3.24 m from the ground level to the ceiling; I thank Gerald Kozicz and Wolfgang Heusgen for kindly supplying these measurements.

[5] Cf. Snellgrove and Skorupski 1980: p. 78 fig. 70 and 80 fig. 73 for Sa spo la, and 1978: 26 figs 13 and 28 for Dgon pa. Dgon pa is an interesting site which appears not to have been studied in depth so far and to deserve more attention from scholars. Its assembly hall, facing the courtyard from the north, is known as Tsha tsha po ri lha khang, whereas the nearby temple, facing the same courtyard from the east, is known as Spyan ras gzigs lha khang. The Kashmirian profile of the nose in some figures in the latter's wall paintings suggests a pre–15th century date. In fact the monastery, which includes buildings, now largely ruined, surrounding the two other sides of the courtyard, might date to the 14th century, as suggested to me by Christian Luczanits during the 11th IALS symposium in Leh (July 2003). Several *maṇḍala*s are painted on the walls of both temples. This rather neglected 'Bri gung foundation is now a dependency of the Dge lugs monastery of Ri rdzong; in a similar way the Chos 'khor at A lci has become a dependency of Klu 'khyil.

assembly hall at Mang rgyu, the topmost register of the four walls of the Gu ru lha khang is decorated with a flock of geese in an continuous line, linking the world of humans to the divine world according to a symbolism found in the early Buddhist art of India.[6] A regular geometric pattern separates the panels including the figures from the lowest, blank section of the wall; a similar motif is found inside a *stūpa* in the village of Mang rgyu, in Ladakh, in the Vajrabhairava Chapel and White Temple at Rtsa brang, as well as in other temples of Western Tibet.[7] There are several inscriptions in *dbu med* writing, both under the main deities painted on the southern wall and below some of the historical figures portrayed on the four walls; those beneath the latter contain a considerable number of spelling mistakes.

A much damaged image of Gur mgon, a *dharmapāla* particularly cherished by the Sa skya pa religious order, keeps watch above the door, where one notices immediately the extent of the damage caused by water seepage through the roof before the architectural structure was restored: only a few details of wall paintings are extant in this section. One of the best-preserved images in the Gu ru lha khang is found in the southern section of the eastern wall, to the left as one enters the temple to perform its circumambulation. It represents a panel depicting Garuḍa as a *dharmapāla* in a rare tantric manifestation, with a pyramid of heads (Pl. 2); the bird's hands hold the tails of eighteen *nāgas* placed in vertical rows at its sides. A bare-chested and cross-legged master, wearing a short white *dhoṭī* with a dark-blue hem and sitting in a meditation posture, may be noticed on the left of the lotus pedestal supporting Garuḍa as one looks towards it. The inscription in *dbu med* writing

[6] This motif, found in other temples in Ladakh as shall be seen below, appears also on the hem of the *dhoṭī* worn by a *mahābodhisattva* painted on the eastern wall in the ambulatory of the main temple in the monastery of Ta bo (Klimburg-Salter 1997: 166 fig. 180). As pointed out by Christian Luczanits in the paper he delivered in Kargil at the 12th IALS conference (2005), it is also found below the ceiling on a wall showing a Bka' brgyud lineage in the main temple at Kanji, painted around 1400.

[7] Cf. Linrothe 1998: 195–97 figs 5–8, Tucci 1936: pls XXXIX–XLVI, LX, LXX–LXXV and CIII, Huo Wei and Li Yongxian. 2001: 28 fig. 11, 49 fig. 36, 70 fig. 72, 94 fig. 111, 146–47 figs 225–27), and Jian Cheng'an 2000: 96–99 7 figs 49–50 (the captions in the last source are rather inaccurate); I thank Olaf Czaja for drawing my attention to the first and last source. This pattern, obviously of Indian origin, is made up of a series of multicoloured triangles indicating the billows of the cosmic ocean, a symbol of phenomenal existence, each including a stylized shell, a symbol of fertility, of life and also of the word of the Buddha, born of the chaos of cosmic waters.

below this figure reads: *Bla ma Rin zangs zhugs so*;[8] I shall deal with this master below.

The register below the panel is occupied by a row of thirteen aristocratic figures attending the ceremonies for the consecration of the temple:[9] six males wearing turbans to the actual right of the composition (left when facing the wall); and seven females to their left (right when facing the wall). They are portrayed at three quarters, all sitting cross-legged and displaying ritual gestures. A white band with partly defaced inscriptions reporting their names separates these figures from the scene below, depicting celebrations including horsemen as well as four more male figures wearing turbans and sitting in similar attitudes in the top right corner of the composition (left when facing the wall; Pl. 3).

The southern wall is occupied by four panels painted with large figures with inscriptions in *dbu med* writing below their feet. They include two tutelary deities, the first being Hevajra (Pl. 4); this first image is relatively well preserved and the scenes of cemeteries surrounding it are depicted in a lively manner. The register below it displays images of *bodhisattva*s standing or walking at the sides of two religious masters, identified by their inscription as Bla ma Rin chen bzang po and Rin chen bkra shis. The two following panels, depicting Saṃvara and the *dharmapāla* Hayagrīva respectively, have not been spared by seepages and, to some extent, by the apparently non-professional repairs carried out on the structure of the building in 1998; however, the last panel on this wall, depicting Vajrapāṇi in his wrathful manifestation, has been left unscathed to some extent. A *bla ma* is again portrayed in the register below the *bodhisattva*; the inscription identifying him includes high-sounding titles, obviously referring to a very important master: *chos rje kun mkhyen … chos kyi mnga' bdag Rin bzang*, namely 'the omniscient lord of the dharma' and 'sovereign of the dharma' Rin (chen) bzang (po).

8 Read *bzang* for *zangs* and *bzhugs* for *zhugs*. I thank Christian Luczanits for providing me with excellent pictures with inscriptions to compare with my earlier transcriptions and Helga Uebach for letting me have good photographs of this section of this wall. The inscriptions in this temple were published by Vitali (1996: 100 and 102); the latter's editing occasionally differs from mine, approved of by Luciano Petech, whose advice I gratefully acknowledge.

9 Luczanits (personal communication of the 14th March 2004) points out that the depictions of celebrations with royal donors—as found also in other temples of Ladakh and Western Tibet—appear to be idealized renderings of consecration ceremonies of temples, showing all important personages as well as people celebrating and bringing offerings.

Proceeding clockwise to the western and rear wall of the temple, the visitor meets the medical Buddha, Bhaiṣajaguru, flanked by two *bodhisattva*s wearing a long transparent *dhoṭī* over short dark underwear and standing in a three-quarter profile; the four great guardian kings are painted standing against a black-and-white decorative background in the register immediately below them. Another small figure of a *bla ma* portrayed in the southern section of the wall is identified again by its inscription as Bla ma Rin bzang. The main image in the central section portrays Śākyamuni flanked by two *bodhisattva*s (Maitreya and, presumably, Mañjuśrī) wearing a long transparent *dhoṭī* over very short dark underwear and standing in three-quarter profile (Pl. 5); like the *bodhisattva*s flanking Bhaiṣajaguru, they are depicted in conformity with a well-known typology—ultimately of Indian origin—which had become fashionable in Tibet and other parts of central Asia by the 12th century, and which is generally believed to have lasted until the 14th century. The portraits of the sixteen *sthavira*s with their two attendants are placed in two vertical stripes at their sides, separating the main central panel from the southern and northern sections of the western wall.

Like the southern section, the northern one is related to the theme of long life, being occupied by a panel depicting Amitāyus flanked by two *bodhisattva*s depicted in the same style as those at the sides of the two other Buddhas painted on the same wall; the two figures portrayed under this Buddha and wearing slightly pointed red hats are identified by their inscriptions, here tentatively edited, as Chos rje 'Jam dbyangs mtshan can and Bla ma Stobs brtan.

Proceeding to the western section of the northern wall the visitor faces a panel including the image of Vajradhāra; the two registers above the primordial Buddha depict the thirty-five Confessional Buddhas, whereas the six below him include vignettes portraying the eighty-four great *siddha*s, a set particularly cherished by the Bka' brgyud and Sa skya pa traditions.

That composition is followed by a panel including an image of the White Tārā, below which the portraits of two lamas are identified by their inscriptions—here partially edited—as Sab(?) bzang Pan chen and Bzang ldan Mkhan po. In a corner below, bordering with the registers depicting the great *siddha*s in the western section of the wall, there is yet another inscribed portrait of Bla ma Rin (chen) bzang (po) perform-

ing a ritual, presumably of consecration (Pl. 6). The White Tārā is followed by the Green one, under whom there are two more masters, identified by their inscriptions as Sa skya Paṇ chen and Chos rje Bla ma Dam pa; as in other portraits in this temple, both wear yellow hats[10] as well as garments in the same colour wrapping their bodies with wide folds, in a baggy fashion, and are surrounded by twofold auras with triangular elements protruding above their shoulders. Such features are reminiscent of the style found in portraits of Bka' brgyud masters belonging to the Stag lung pa as well as other religious orders, some of which are regarded as earlier than they are actually are.[11] Among the following images one may easily recognize Uṣṇīṣavijayā and a historical figure, Ma gcig, corresponding to the last important painting extant on the northern wall.

The northern section of the entrance wall is occupied by a couple of *dharmapāla*s surmounted by a register including figures such as the *ācarya* Padmasambhava wearing a yellow hat[12] next to the *siddha* Virūpa stopping the sun while being offered beer by a maid (Pl. 7).

The *bum pa* of the wooden *stūpa* rising south of the altar is decorated with the portraits of four different masters wearing red hats (Pl. 8), whereas the 'throne' supporting the four steps below it is painted with the images of the four great kings of the directions. The style of these images is very similar to that of the wall paintings and suggests that the

[10] There are portraits of religious masters wearing yellow as well as red hats in other shrines decorated in a similar style during the first Ladakhi dynasty, for example inside the *stūpa* at Nyar ma (cf. Panglung 1983: pls IX/B, X/A and XII–XIII). Atiśa, now generally mistaken for Tsong kha pa, is portrayed wearing a yellow hat both on the eastern wall in cave temple No. 3 at Sa spo la (cf. Snellgrove and Skorupski 1980: 81) and on the western wall in the assembly hall of the upper Maitreya temple at Ba sgo (cf. Snellgrove and Skorupski 1977: 96). For another example of Atiśa wearing a yellow hat see Pal 2003: 178–79 pl. 116. That the colour of the hat is not always sufficient to ascribe a figure to a particular religious order is confirmed by other examples. Incidentally, some of my Ladakhi informants call both Dge lugs and Sa skya pa monks *ser po*, namely 'yellow', as opposed to those belonging to other religious orders, whom they term *dmar po*, 'red'.

[11] As shown by Martin (2001: 165–66) in his discussion on an inscribed *thang ka* attributed by Jane Casey Singer to c. 1200, but actually painted after 1273; Martin's evidence seems to have been overlooked in a recent paper by Singer (2003: 118–23).

[12] Padmasambhava is portrayed with a yellow hat in the wall paintings of 'Bri gung pa foundations, for example in those of an old and neglected temple in the monastery of Nyo ma, in upper Ladakh. For instances of Padmasambhava depicted with a yellow or orange headgear in Tibetan painting previous to the 15th century see for example Pal 2003: 212–13 pl. 137, 190 and 192 pl. 126.

stūpa may belong to the period of decoration of the temple; in fact it is likely that it occupied the central place now taken by the altar built by the owners, as is still the case in the assembly hall at A lci Dgon pa.

The iconographic programme of the Gu ru lha khang appears to be heterogenous, although it reflects a special interest in the Sa skya pa tradition. The most easily identifiable historical figures (Padmasambhava, the eighty-four great *siddha*s, Ma gcig, Sa skya Paṇḍita and Chos rje Bla ma Dam pa) range from the 8th to the second half of the 14th century, the latter obviously representing a terminus post quem.

The historical character most frequently represented in the wall paintings is Bla ma Rin chen bzang po dressed in clerical garb, except in the figure wearing a *dhoṭī* portrayed above the aristocrats attending the consecration ritual. This guru appears no less than five times on the four main walls—attending or performing rituals with his name once written in full and four times shortened to Rin bzang; his identification would be essential to date the wall paintings in this temple, in whose planning and consecration he must have played a crucial role. He cannot be identified either with the famous Western Tibetan translator, Rin chen bzang po,[13] or with the Bka' brgyud bla ma Rin chen bzang po (1243–1319):[14] the presence of the two great scholars Sa skya Paṇḍita (1182–1251) and Chos rje Bla ma Dam pa Bsod nams rgyal mtshan (1312–1375)[15] facing each other points to some later important master.

Let us now turn again to the row of aristocratic figures painted below Garuḍa on the southern section of the entrance wall. They are divided into two groups facing each other: the one to the right (left when fac-

[13] Apparently disregarding the extant epigraphic evidence, Dkon mchog rnam rgyal (1998: 45) relates the Gu ru lha khang as well as its nearby temples to the 'Translator' (Rin chen bzang po) and to the Bka' gdams religious order.

[14] This Bla ma Rin chen bzang po (1243–1319) belonged to the lineage of Rngog Chos kyi rdo rje, the founder of a school of interpretation of the *Hevajra tantra*, and became abbot of a monastery (Roerich 1976: 410).

[15] I thank Amy Heller for pointing out the importance of the presence of the portrait of this master in the Gu ru lha khang for dating purposes. Bla ma Dam pa Bsod nams rgyal mtshan took office as 8th chief abbot of Sa skya in 1344 (cf. Petech 1990: 100 and 144, where his name appears erroneously as "Bla-ma Dam-pa bSod-nams-blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan") and was the greatest Sa skya pa scholar of the 14th century; besides playing an important role in securing peace between his religious order and Byang chub rgyal mtshan, he wrote an important chronicle of Tibet and was an eminent representative in the transmission of teachings related to the Vajravalī *maṇḍala* (Heller 2004).

ing the wall) includes five males figures; the opposite one is made up by another male figure and by the seven ladies sitting to his left (right when facing the wall).

The six male aristocrats wear white or else red-and-green headgears; six white turbans or covers with different shapes lie at their feet. Instead of describing them from left to right, I shall start from the centre, where the most important figure is placed, and then proceed towards the right of the composition (left when facing the wall), following its hierarchical arrangement. The central figure (sixth from the left when facing the wall) is identified by the inscription as Jo Ar Btsan. This prince is depicted as bigger and taller than the others: the top of his red-and-green patterned headgear (identical to those worn by the second and fifth figures from the left) invades the panel above and touches a petal in the lower range of the corolla supporting Garuḍa;[16] a folding table laid with jugs and vases is placed in front of him in the composition depicting the festivites below. He is obviously the main figure, occupying a central position with his mother or consort next to him, and the sponsor of the decoration of the temple. The male figure he faces (fifth from the left when facing the wall) is a kin, identified by the inscription as Jo Ar Rgyal lde.

The two aristocratic figures sitting to the latter's right are identified by their inscriptions as Jo Khri Gtsug lde (third from the left when facing the wall) and Jo Ar 'Bum lde (fourth from the left when facing the wall); both wear white turbans, like the prince at the far end of the row. The next figure (second from the left when facing the wall) is inscribed Ang (perhaps for 'Ar') 'Od ma and the last one proceeding leftwards from the centre of the group (first from the left when facing the wall) is identified as Pho co Skyid sring mo Rgyos.

Ar is the name of a Tibetan clan mentioned in connection with events occurring in Western Tibet until at least the 15th century (cf. Vitali 1996: 102); but none of its members portrayed in this temple has been traced in historical sources. The only figure that may be identified among the aristocrats depicted at the consecration ceremony does not belong to the Ar clan: that is Jo Khri Gtsug lde, corresponding to the

[16] This might not be a coincidence: in the Indian subcontinent, particularly in its northern areas, Garuḍa performs the role of carrier of rulers regarding themselves as manifestations of the god Viṣṇu.

king of Ladakh, Lha chen Khri Gtsug lde.[17] The epithets preceding his name and his presence among three members of the Ar clan suggest that the temple was decorated at a time in which he was still in power[18] and that the Ar family, which sponsored the decoration of the Gu ru lha khang, was then a powerful one in Ladakh and possibly even related to the royal family.[19]

In order to identify the Rin chen bzang po who performed the consecration ceremonies for the Gu ru lha khang we must then look for an important religious figure having lived during the 15th century. The only candidate I have been able to find so far is the *mkhan chen* Rin chen bzang po portrayed in a late 18th century *thang ka* depicting Cakrasaṃvara surrounded by a lineage of 'Bri gung pa masters;[20] this Rin chen bzang po appears as twenty-second in a series, arranged in a chronological sequence, immediately after Gtsang pa Blo gros bzang po (1360–1423; Roerich 1976: 692–693) and seems to correspond to Rin chen dpal bzang po (1421/1422–1467/68; Sperling 1987: 39, 40, 47, n. 57), who became great abbot (*mkhan chen*) of 'Bri gung, functioned as both religious and civil head (*sgom pa*) of the 'Bri gung pa order,

---

[17] Petech accepts my identification in a personal communication dated 25th April 2004.

[18] The term *khri* (throne) appearing in front of his name was commonly used in Tibet during the monarchic period as an epithet for kings, whereas the term *jo bo* in the expression *jo bo bdag po* was used with reference to kings in Western Tibet, for instance in the early 17th century (cf. Petech 1977: 41–45); the titles *jo bo* and *jo* were used in Ladakh to designate local rulers, including kings (cf. Petech 1977: 17–18 and 155).

[19] In the composition the red-and-green patterned headgear is worn by members of the Ar family except 'Bum lde, who wears the same kind of white headgear worn by Khri Gtsug lde, sitting next to him. It may be tempting to identify the Jo Ar 'Bum lde sitting next to the king of Ladakh with Grags 'Bum lde, who succeeded his father (*La dwags rygal rabs* in Francke 1992: 36) Khri Gtsug lde in the 15th century and who might have been related to the Ar clan on his mother's side; but that would be rather conjectural unless textual or epigraphic evidence becomes available: several princes bearing the name 'Bum lde are known to have ruled in Ladakh and neighbouring areas from at least the 13th century. It appears in the name of a king of Gung thang, Khri rgyal 'Bum lde mgon (1253–1280; Ehrhard 1993: 24), as well as in those of two rulers of Suru (upper Purig) and Kartse: Rgyal 'Bum lde (1345–1400), who married to the Muslim daughter of a ruler of Kashmir; and Chos 'Bum lde (1400–1430), who married to a Buddhist (Howard 1997: 126). Of course mention ought to be made also of Grags pa 'Bum, the prince of Nubra and Grags 'Bum lde's younger brother (*La dwags rygal rabs* in Francke 1992: 36). The name 'Bum lde appears also at Mul bhe in two inscriptions studied by Francke and reported by Jina (1998: 19,20,62,64,89, Nos.39 and 41); Petech (1977: 22) states that the latter 'Bum lde may be the same as Grags 'Bum lde.

[20] Jackson 1996: 343 pl. 64 and 411 (where the numbers referring to the actual plates are wrong by four figures).

married and had children in the 1440s. If that is the case, then the Gu ru lha khang must have been decorated after this 15th century Rin chen bzang po had become important enough to be qualified with all the titles, *bla ma, chos rje kun mkhyen* and *chos kyi mnga' bdag*, preceding his name in the inscriptions in the temple, hence not before the 1440s. That implies of course that Khri Gtsug lde ruled at a period later than those commonly suggested and raises the controversy concerning the ruling period of his son as well as successor, Grags 'Bum lde, for which I follow the view that the latter may well have ascended the throne as late as about 1450.[21]

The suggestion that the Gu ru lha khang was decorated after Bla ma Rin chen bzang po had become *mkhan chen* and when Khri Gtsug lde was still in power, perhaps just before Grags 'Bum lde ascended the throne, may contribute to clarify the datings put forward, chiefly on stylistic grounds, by Gilles Béguin and Lionel Fournier in connection with its wall paintings;[22] but how does the decoration of this temple relate to the cultural history of Ladakh and, in particular, to the 'Bri gung pa environment to which Bla ma Rin chen bzang po apparently belonged?

From a stylistic point of view the decoration of the Gu ru lha khang must be related to a style that has already been described in detail (cf. Luczanits 1998: 153–54) and whose main features may be summarized

[21] Concerning the period of Grags 'Bum lde's rule, Jamspal (1997: 141–43) challenges the dates suggested by Petech (1410–1435) as well as those put forward by Francke and Tashi Rabyas (1400–1440), arguing in favour of the period 1450–1490, thus implying that also Khri Gtsug lde's reign was later than usually assumed. Dge 'dun grub sent two envoys to Ladakh about four decades after Tsong kha pa's death; after being received by Grags 'Bum lde in Ladakh, these Dge lugs monks returned to Bkra shis lhun po in 1461 Jamspal (1997: 141). In this connection Petech (personal communication of the 25th April 2004) states that Jamspal is "perfectly right" and points out that the authority of the latter's source, the biography of the 1st Dalai Lama written in 1494 by Ye shes rtse mo, almost a contemporary of Dge 'dun grub, cannot be challenged; adding that the whole issue of the history of the early dynasties of Ladakh is to be addressed again, the Italian scholar concludes that the *Vaiḍūrya ser po* is "as little accurate" from a chronological point of view as the La dwags rgyal rabs is from a historical point of view. So there seems to be no doubt that the son (*La dwags rygal rabs* in Francke 1992: 36) and successor of Khri Gtsug lde was the king of Ladakh in 1461; and Jamspal may well be right also in suggesting that Grags 'Bum lde ascended the throne around 1450.

[22] Béguin and Fournier (1987: 383) attribute the paintings in the Gu ru lha khang to the end of the 14th or early 15th century ("de la fin du XIVe s. ou du tout début du XVe"); but two paragraphs below (1987: 385) they have "early decades of the 15th century" ("premières décennies du XVe s.").

as follows: a division of the decorated surface into rectangular panels and registers; a degree of shading aimed at giving some depth to the surfaces of the bodies; images of Buddhas flanked by pairs of bare-chested *bodhisattva*s standing in three-quarter profile and wearing a long transparent *dhoṭī* over short dark underwear; and pairs of triangular projections above the figures' shoulders.[23] To those features one may add the presence of a black narrow band decorated with a line of white geese at the top of the wall, just below the ceiling.

Such characteristics are found in several Ladakhi temples grouped together by Luczanits (1998: 161) and including the Seng ge lha khang at G.yu ru,[24] the Bkra shis gsum brtsegs temple at Wan la[25] and the Lha khang so ma in the Chos 'khor at A lci.[26] In the same group one should also include the two deserted temples extant at A lci Dgon pa as well as an old and equally neglected temple in the monastery of Nyo ma.[27] Some of those features may be found even in the temple of Shang rong,[28] in cave temple No. 3 at Sa spo la and inside a *stūpa* at Nyar ma, an early establishment founded by Rin chen bzang po and destroyed by 1447 (cf. Panglung 1983: 284).

23 These couples of triangular elements, eventually interpreted as belonging to the backs of thrones, appear in Gandhāra sculpture and were meant to represent rays of light (see for example Tucci 1958: 229 and cf. Bussagli 1984: 109–11). The same motif was also adopted in Islamic architectural decoration and may be seen, for example, on the dome of the mausoleum of Ismail (*c.* 907) at Bukhara (Mozzati 2000: 100); such mausoleums were modelled after Zoroastrian fire temples (*chahar taq*).

24 Also this early foundation was taken over by the 'Bri gung pa school (Snellgrove and Skorupski 1977: 21); this probably happened—as in the case of A lci—sometimes during the first decades of the 13th century.

25 Cf. Luczanits 2002: pls 94 (background wall) and 98.

26 Snellgrove and Skorupski 1977: 67 fig. 58; the two authors (*ibid.*: 64 and 79) suggest a 12th–13th century date for the decoration of this temple, whereas Béguin and Fournier (1987: 382 and 385) regard it as not earlier than the late 15th century. The sexual imagery of the tutelary deities depicted in the upper register of the northern wall implies that the iconographic programme of this temple was conceived in a different religious milieu to that of Rin chen bzang po and his followers.

27 Mentioned by Francke (1992: 226 and 300) as a village on the Indus, but appearing as "Nyi ma" in his map; Petech (1977: 43) places it "between Lahul and Rupshu". I am grateful to Mr Shirish B. Patel for providing me, thanks to Dr Romila Thapar's indication, with colour prints of the paintings on the walls and ceiling in this temple, "built lower down on the hill where the main structure stands" (Shirish Patel's personal communication of the 5th June 1996). In contrast, the wall paintings in the main monastic building at Nyo ma are in a completely different style and may be related to the new schools that had developed in Ladakh by the mid-16th century. Around 1627 the *chos rje* of Nyo ma played a minor political role during the war between Ladakh and Gu ge (Petech 1977: 43).

All the temples mentioned above are or were related to the cultural and artistic environment which developed in Ladakh after the disappearance of Buddhism from the Kashmir Valley. In particular, the iconography and style of the paintings in the Gu ru lha khang may be related to the religious milieu that flourished in Western Tibet and bordering areas from the early 13th century, mainly under the influence of the Bka' brgyud monastery of 'Bri khung, in central Tibet, as witnessed by the portrait of its founder, 'Jig rten mgon po (1143–1217), in the upper storey of the Gsum brtsegs lha khang in the Chos 'khor at A lci. [29] The 'Bri gung pa influence in Ladakh had started to be felt especially after 1215, when a monastery was founded in the Kailasa area by order of 'Jig rten mgon po himself and thanks to the patronage of three kings, one being the Ladakhi ruler, Lha chen Dngos grub mgon (cf. Petech 1977: 19–20 and 315–16).

To some extent the iconographic programme in the Gu ru lha khang must reflect the interest of the Ar clan in the religious tradition of Sa skya, whose influence was felt all over Tibet after the abbots of the 'Khon family established privileged relationships with their Mongol overlords. On the other hand, the reiterated depiction of Bla ma Rin chen bzang po performing the consecration of the wall paintings may reflect a specific interest of the king of Ladakh, who is portrayed at the ceremony, and of some his successors in the 'Bri gung pa religious order: about a century later, under King Bkra shis rnam rgyal,[30] the 'Bri gung pa monastery of Bkra shis chos rdzong would be founded in the very oasis of Phyi dbang, where the Gu ru lha khang already stood.

The Bka' brgyud connection with the Rnying ma tradition is illus-

[28] Béguin and Fournier (1987: 385) suggest that the decoration of the temple at Shang rong may date to the end of the 14th century.

[29] Goepper (1996: 16) attributes the Gsum brtsegs to the end of the 12th and beginning of the 13th century; Snellgrove and Skorupski (1977: 79) attribute the wall paintings on the ground floor to the 11th–12th century.

[30] One of the brightest rulers of the second dynasty of Ladakh, this king inherited the same non-sectarian attitude shown by his predecessors, including the sponsors of the Gu ru lha khang: he supported different schools, sending precious gifts to the monasteries of 'Bri gung, Sa skya, Dga' ldan, Lha sa and Bsam yas (Petech 1977: 28). There is no evidence that the Sa skya pa order ever replaced the 'Bri gung pa one in Ladakh or even controlled the region; the only Sa skya pa monastery in Ladakh, Ma spro, is a small foundation that does not seem have played a significant political role before the 17th century (cf. Petech 1977: 37). In fact Western Tibet in general "was outside the territory of the direct administration of the Sa skya abbots as representatives of the Mongol emperors of China; and indeed it was not subjected to the two censuses carried out by the Mongols of Tibet in 1268 and 1288" (Petech 1977: 22). Be as it may, any

trated in the Gu ru lha khang by the small portrait of Padmasambhava in the upper register of the entrance wall: the master from Swat enjoys a special status in Bka' brgyud schools, which had close ties with the Rnying ma ones well before the birth of the Ris med movement;[31] in fact the clay image of Gu ru Rin po che is placed on the altar of this temple along with those of Mi la ras pa and of another master, perhaps Atiśa, wearing a pointed red hat. The Tibetan historical figure most prominently represented in the temple is Ma gcig, who is depicted in her usual dancing posture in the last panel on the northern wall. She appears also in other temples related to the 'Bri gung pa environment in Ladakh;[32] but like other figures in the Gu ru lha khang, such as the tutelary deity Hevajra or the primordial Buddha Vajradhāra with the eighty-four *mahāsiddha*s, she points to more than one Tibetan religious school.[33]

---

remote political influence of the Sa skya pa order in Ladakh would have altogether disappeared by the time the Gu ru lha khang was consecrated at Phyi dbang, as implied by the presence in this temple of the portrait of Bla ma dam pa Bsod nams rgyal mtshan, who accepted, on behalf of Sa skya, the Phag mo gru pa, hence Bka' brgyud, supremacy over Tibet (cf. Petech 1990: 116–17, 120 n. 138 and 126–27).

[31] In spite of belonging to the tradition of the 'new' (*gsar ma*) Buddhist teachings coming from India, Bka' brgyud schools retained features characterizing the tradition of earlier (*rnying ma*) teachings. In connection with the areas dealt with in this paper, mention may be made of the suggestion that the 5th 'Brug chen, Dpag bsam dbang po, made to Stag tshang ras pa around 1622, to restore all the shrines attributed to Padmasambhava around the Kailasa and on the shore of the Manasarovar (Petech 1977: 42). A small temple devoted to Padmasambhava, presumably built and decorated in a 'Bri gung pa environment, is found at Shang rong, one of the four hamlets making up A lci (Snellgrove and Skorupski 1977: 28), whereas a portrait of the same master appears next to an image of Śāntarakṣita in a panel painted on the northern wall (Snellgrove and Skorupski 1977: 67, fig. 58) in the Lha khang so ma, built in the Chos 'khor after the 'Bri gung pa order had taken over the site of A lci; furthemore, a chapel dedicated to Guru Rin po che's manifestation as Padma rgyal po is found in the 'Bri gung pa monastery of Bkra shis chos rdzong, at Phyi dbang. More important temples devoted to Padmasambhava are found in the 'Brug pa monasteries of He mis and Lce 'bre, which were accorded special protection by the kings of Ladakh; and a temple especially devoted to Padmasambhava is found in the 'Brug pa monastery at Snye mo. Padmasambhava is portrayed along with Mi la ras pa in the castle of Ba sgo, on the eastern section of the northern wall in the assembly hall of the upper temple (dedicated to Maitreya in the 16th century) which is a dependency of He mis. Examples of the importance of Padmasambhava's role in Bka' brgyud iconographic programmes are found in other parts of the Himalayan world, for instance in the Karma monastery built on the top of Svayambhū hill, in the Nepal Valley, where Gu ru Rin po che occupies a prominent position, next to Śākyamuni.

[32] For example painted on the southern wall in the *tshogs khang* in the monastery of Phyi dbang, but also at A lci Dgon pa—both on the southern ground floor wall of the Spyan ras gzigs lha khang and on the southern section of the eastern ground floor wall in the *'du khang*—as well as in cave temple No. 3 at Sa spo la, if the white

The Bka’ brgyud cultural penetration in Ladakh since the 13th century promoted the development of a local school of painting that brought together a taste for drawing typical of the Kashmirian manner (as represented by the early decoration of the Gsum brtsegs temple in the Chos ’khor at A lci) with the Tibetan idiom, ultimately related to northern Indian aesthetics as represented by a number of *thang ka*s painted in the Bka’ brgyud environment. This ‘early Ladakhi style’ (Luczanits 1998: 153) developed and spread to various parts of Ladakh in a process that was completed perhaps not by the end of the 13th century, as suggested by Goepper (1996: 18), but certainly with the Muslim conquest of Kashmir in 1337, a date marking the end of both Buddhist and Hindu artistic production in the Kashmir Valley: as Buddhism disappeared from that important neighbour and Ladakhi monks travelled increasingly to Tibet for religious training, the artists of Ladakh came more under the influence of Tibetan aesthetics.

This indigenous style of painting lost the refined elegance characterizing Kashmirian aesthetics, but retained a certain liveliness and sketchiness in the drawing, a rich palette and a limited use of shading; furthermore it possesses the fresh and immediate vigour shown by Romanesque and Byzantine art when compared with Hellenistic and Renaissance art. Its success may be measured by its duration: it flourished apparently over a period of about three centuries, from the early 13th century until the early 16th century.[34]

By the mid 16th century, with the rise of the second Ladakhi dynasty, this local and apparently anonymous school of painting started to be replaced by a more sophisticated one, which was closer to contemporary Tibetan aesthetics and no longer anonymous. This is represented by the murals in the *tshogs khang* of Bkra shis chos rdzong, built on the ‘Blue Top’ at Phyi dbang in the late 1550s,[35] or in the upper Maitreya temple, raised at the top of the fortress of Ba sgo,[36] both bearing

---

dancing *yoginī* painted on the first of the three short western walls corresponds to Ma gcig. At least two different and equally important religious figures are known under the epithet of Ma gcig (Lo Bue 1994).

[33] The iconographic programme of the Gu ru lha khang does not show any interest in the Dge lugs tradition because the latter started spreading in Ladakh only after Grags ’Bum lde ascended the throne, while the Bka’ brgyud clergy’s influence at court continued unabated: after the ’Bri gung pa order, also the ’Brug pa one was accorded special protection by the Ladakhi kings, who contributed to the establishment of important Bka’ brgyud monasteries and temples such as those still standing at Phyi dbang, Ba sgo, He mis, Lce ’bre and Stag sna, especially in the 16th and 17th century.

[34] The wall paintings in cave temple No. 3 at Sa spo la have been tentatively attrib-

inscriptions with names of contemporary painters.[37] By that time Ladakhi painters had abandoned the style represented by the decoration of the Gu ru lha khang at Phyi dbang, of the Lha khang so ma in the Chos ’khor at A lci or of cave temple No. 3 at Sa spo la, in favour of a rather different idiom (cf. Béguin and Fournier 1987: 385); that aesthetic perceptions in the 16th century had deeply changed locally is confirmed by the circumstance that two of the painters mentioned in inscriptions as authors of wall paintings in the *tshogs khang* of the ‘Blue Top’ monastery were from Phyi dbang, Dpe thub and A lci.

The importance of the wall paintings in the Gu ru lha khang at Phyi dbang lies in the fact that they represent the persistence in the 15th century of an indigenous idiom whose compositional, iconographic and decorative features derive from Indo-Tibetan aesthetics largely related to the religious and cultural influence of the ’Bri gung pa tradition in Ladakh since the 13th century.[38] If one adds that an important king of the first Ladakhi dynasty is portrayed therein and identified by an

---

uted to the early 16th century by Béguin and Fournier (1987: 385 fig. 22), who published a picture of Cave No. 3 upside down.

35 The monastery of Sgang sngon Bkra shis chos rdzong was established by Chos rje Ldan ma Kun dga’ grags pa, the head of the ’Bri gung pa community in the Kailasa-Manasarovar region and root-guru of king Bkra shis rnam rgyal (Petech 1977: 28–29 and 1978: 324); a portrait (*sku ’gra = sku ’dra*) of Chos rje ldan ma identified by an inscription is found at the western end of the southern wall in the *tshogs khang* of this monastery. Incidentally, Béguin and Fournier (1987: 386, n. 45) misquote Snellgrove and Skorupski to support their statement that the eldest parts of Phyi dbang were founded in the 15th century by king Grags ’Bum lde.

36 The wall paintings in this temple date to the rule of king Tshe dbang rnam rgyal, hence to the second half of the 16th century (cf. Snellgrove and Skorupski 1977: 93 with Petech 1977: 32). Petech (*ibid.*) suggests that the reign of that king was marked by the continuation of ’Bri gung pa influence: the ’Brug pa religious order became powerful in Ladakh only after the arrival of Stag tshang ras pa, during the first half of the 17th century.

37 In 2002 and 2003 I copied the following names of painters with their titles and places of origin from the inscriptions in the *tshogs khang* in the monastery of Phyi dbang: *dpon po* Don grub dpal ’byor from A lci (*’A lci* in the text); *Chi dbyang* (*sic*) *gi dpon* ’Ga’ nu (or ’Gan nu), once in connection with a commission by the queen (*rgyal mo mchog gi (=gis) mdzad*), and *Phyi yang* (sic) *kyi dpon* ’Ga’ nu, apparently referring to the same master painter from Phyi dbang; ’*Chi dbyang* (sic) *gi dpon Blo* (*Lob* in the text) bzang don grub (’*grub* in the text); *dpon* Sran(?) pa and *dpon* Bstan pa (*Stan pa* in the text), both spellings referring probably to the same master; *sor mo ‘du byed* Dpal mgon tshe ring; and *dpon* Don grub legs pa from Dpe thub. I found the name of this last master mentioned also in an inscription above the royal scene painted on the western section of the southern wall in the upper Maitreya temple at Ba sgo, consecrated under king Tshe dbang rnam rgyal during the second half of the 16th century.

inscription, it follows that the preservation and restoration of this temple ought not to be a matter of concern for its owners only.

Bibliography

Béguin, G. and L. Fournier 1987. Un sanctuaire méconnu de la région d'Alchi. *Oriental Art* XXXII(4), 373–87.

Bussagli, M. 1984. *L'arte del Gandhara*. Torino: UTET.

Dkon mchog rnam rgyal 1998. Phyi dbang gyi chags rabs. *La dwags kyi Shes rab zom, Shi ra za* 20(2), 41–47.

Ehrhard, F. 1993. Tibetan sources in Muktinath. *Ancient Nepal* 134, 23–41.

Francke, A. H. 1992. *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, Part II, *The Chronicles of Ladakh and Minor Chronicles. Texts and Translations, with Notes and Maps.* New Delhi/Madras: Asian Educational Services.

Goepper, R. 1996. *Alci. Il santuario buddhista nascosto del Ladakh. Il Sumtsek.* Milano: Adelphi.

Heller, A. 2004. The Vajravali mandala of Shalu and Sakya: the legacy of Buton (1290–1364). *Orientations* 35(4), 69–73.

Howard, N. 1989. The development of the fortresses of Ladakh c. 950 to c. 1650 A.D. *East and West* 39(1–4), 217–88.

—— What happened between 1450 and 1550 AD? and other questions from the history of Ladakh. *In* H. Osmaston and N. Tsering (eds) *Recent Research on Ladakh. Proceedings of the Sixth International Colloquia on Ladakh, Leh 1993*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 121–37.

Jackson, D. 1996. *A History of Tibetan Painting. The Great Tibetan Painters and Their Traditions*. Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse Denkschriften 242, Beiträge zur Kultur- und Geistesgeschichte Asiens 15. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

Jamspal, L. 1997. The five royal patrons and three Maitreya images in Basgo. *In* H. Osmaston and N. Tsering (eds) *Recent Research on Ladakh. Proceedings of the Sixth International Colloquia on Ladakh, Leh 1993*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 139–56.

Huo Wei and Li Yongxian 2001. *The Buddhist Art in Western Tibet*. Chengdu: Sichuan University Press.

Jiang Cheng'an and Zheng Wenlei (eds) 2000. *Precious Deposits. Historical Relics of Tibet, China*. Vol. 1. Beijing: Morning Glory Publishers.

Jina, P. 1998. *Tibetan Manuscripts and Inscriptions of Ladakh*. New Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications.

Klimburg-Salter, D. *et al.* 1997. *Tabo, a Lamp for the Kingdom. Early Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Art in the Western Himalaya*. Milano: Skira.

[38] The persistence of early cultural features is a characteristic of peripheral areas, which often tend to be culturally conservative—preserving for instance even archaic pronunciations—while changes may occur faster in culturally hegemonic centres. In that respect Ladakhi painting is important and deserves serious scholarly attention: examples of 'Bri gung pa styles survive in Ladakh along with those of earlier and later Western Tibetan ones (cf. Jackson 1996: 352).

Linrothe, R. 1998. The Murals of Mangyu: A Distillation of Mature Esoteric Buddhist Iconography. *Art of Tibet. Selected Articles from Orientations*. 1981–1997. Hong Kong: Orientations Magazine, 194–204 (reprint of an article published in *Orientations*, November 1994).

Lo Bue, E. 1985. The Newar artists of the Nepal valley. An historical account of their activities in neighbouring areas with particular reference to Tibet—I. *Oriental Art* XXXI(3), 262–77.

—— 1996. A Case of Mistake Identity: Ma-gcig Labs-sgron and Ma-gcig Zha-ma. *In* P. Kvaerne (ed.) *Tibetan Studies. Proceedings of the 6th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies*. *Fagernes 1992*, Vol. 1. Oslo: The Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, 481–90.

Luczanits, C. 1998. On an Unusual Painting Style in Ladakh. *In* D. Klimburg-Salter and E. Allinger (eds) *The Inner Asian International Style. 12th–14th Centuries.* Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse Denkschriften 267, Beiträge zur Kultur- und Geistesgeschichte Asiens 25. Wien: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 151–69.

—— 2002. The Wanla Bkra shis gsum brtsegs. *In* H. Blezer, A. McKay and C. Ramble (eds) *Buddhist Art and Tibetan Patronage. Ninth to Fourteenth Centuries. PIATS 2000. Tibetan Studies. Proceedings of the Ninth Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Leiden 2000*. Brill's Tibetan Studies Library 2/7. Leiden-Boston-Köln: Brill, 115–25.

Martin, D. 2001. Painters, patrons and paintings of patrons in early Tibetan art. *In* R. Linrothe and H. Sørensen (eds) *Embodying Wisdom: Art Text and Interpretation in the History of Esoteric Buddhism*. Copenhagen: The Seminar for Buddhist Studies, 139–84.

Singer Casey, J. 2003. A Tibetan painting of Chemchog heruka's maṇḍala in the McCormick collection revisited. *In* I. Kreide-Damani (ed.) *Dating Tibetan Art. Essays on the Possibilities and Impossibilities of Chronology from the Lempertz Symposium, Cologne*. Contributions to Tibetan Studies 3. Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 113–35.

Mozzati, L. 2000. *Islam*, Milano: Electa.

Pal, P. *et al.* 2003. *Himalayas. An Aesthetic Adventure*. Chicago/Berkeley/Ahmedabad: The Art Institute of Chicago/University of California Press/Mapin Publishing.

Panglung, J. 1983. Die Überreste des Klosters Ñar ma in Ladakh. *In* E. Steinkellner and H. Tauscher (eds) *Contributions on Tibetan Language, History and Culture Proceedings of the Csoma de Körös Symposium Held at Velm-Vienna, Austria, 13–19 September 1981*, Vol. 1. Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde 10. Wien: Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien Universität Wien, 281–87 and pls. VIII–XV.

Petech, L. 1977. *The Kingdom of Ladakh. C. 950–1842 A.D.* Serie Orientale Roma LI. Roma: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente.

—— 1990. *Central Tibet and the Mongols. The Yüan—Sa-skya Period of Tibetan History*. Serie Orientale Roma LXV. Roma: IsMEO.

—— 1978. The 'Bri-guṅ-pa Sect in Western Tibet and Ladakh. *In* L. Ligeti (ed.) *Proceedings of the Csoma de Körös Memorial Symposium*. Bibliotheca Orientalis Hungarica XXIII. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 313–25.

Roerich, G. (ed.) 1976. *The Blue Annals*. Varanasi/Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Snellgrove, D. and T. Skorupski 1977. *The Cultural Heritage of Ladakh*, Vol. 1, *Central Ladakh*. Warminster: Aris & Phillips.

—— 1980. *The Cultural Heritage of Ladakh*, Vol. 2, *Zangskar and the Cave Temples of Ladakh*. Warminster: Aris & Phillips.

Sperling, E. 1987. Some notes on the early 'Bri-gung-pa Sgom-pa. *In* C. Beckwith (ed.) *Silver on Lapis. Tibetan Literary Culture and History*. Bloomington: The Tibet Society, 33–53.

Tucci, G. 1936. *Indo-Tibetica*, Vol. III, *I templi del Tibet occidentale e il loro simbolismo artistico*, Part II, *Tsaparang*, Roma: Reale Accademia d'Italia.

Tucci, G. 1958. On a sculpture of the Gandhāra. *East and West* 9/3, 227–32.

Vitali, R. 1996. Ladakhi Temples of the 13th–14th Century: Kan-Ji Lha-Khang in Spu-Rig and its analogies with Gu-ru Lha-Khang. *Kailash* XVIII(3–4), 93–106.



Plate 1: Phyi dbang. Gu ru lha khang. 15th century
(photo courtesy Luciano Monticelli)



Plate 2: Phyi dbang. Gu ru lha khang. Garuḍa (photo courtesy Laura Jokisaari)

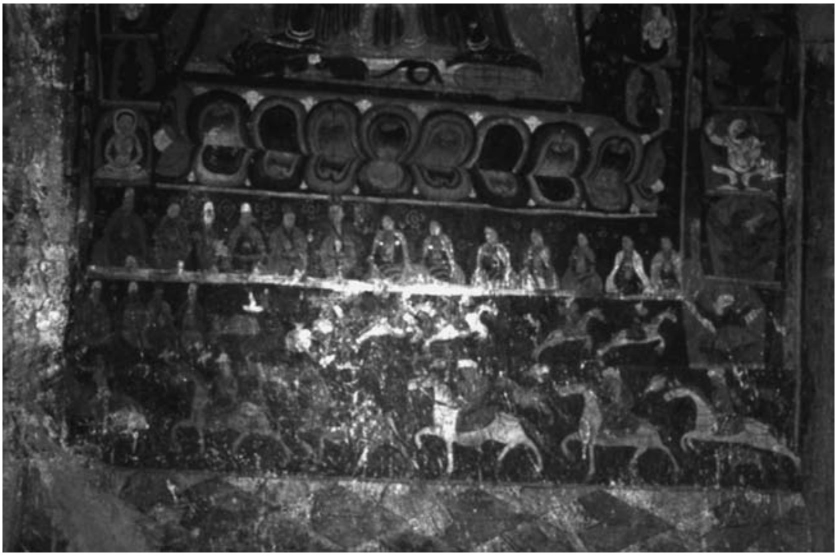


Plate 3: Phyi dbang. Gu ru lha khang. Scene of consecration
(photo courtesy Laura Jokisaari)



Plate 4: Gu ru lha khang. Hevajra (photo courtesy Laura Jokisaari)



Plate 5: Phyi dbang. *Bodhisattva* (photo courtesy Chiara Bellini)



Plate 6: Phyi dbang. Gu ru lha khang. Rin chen bzang po (photo courtesy Olaf Czaja)



Plate 7: Phyi dbang. Gu ru lha khang. Detail of eastern wall
(photo courtesy Olaf Czaja)



Plate 8: Phyi dbang. Gu ru lha khang. Detail of stupa
(photo courtesy Laura Jokisaari)

REMARKS ON THE FOUNDATION AND HISTORY OF BSAM GLING DGON PA

GESHE WANGYAL† (DOLPO, NEPAL)

ABSTRACT

The topic will research the cultural history of the monastery Bde ldan Bsam gtan gling, the main monastic residence of the Rgyal gshen Yang ngal lineage, founded 900 years ago by Yang ston rgyal mtshan rin chen mchog between the Byi cher and Sprad regions of Dolpo. The author of this presentation is a member of the Ldong family, named Nyi ma dbang ldan and generally known as Wangyal (Dbang rgyal). He was born in Dolpo Spung mo, and has obtained the Bonpo monastic grade of Bka' rab byams pa. Bsam gling is the principal Bon monastery in the Dolpo region. The lamas of this monastery maintained close relations with the principal Bon po monasteries in Tibet, such as the Dben sa kha monastery in the G.yas ru Gtsang region. Moreover, in terms of sacred relics and books, Bsam gling itself became the principal repository. Due to these factors, the profound examination of the initial genealogy and history is very signficant. The presentation will cover the following subjects:

1) The origins of the Rgyal gshen yang ngal lineage, the original monastery of the lineage and the reasons for its migrating to Dolpo.

2) The reasons for the foundation of the Bsam gling monastery and benefits arising from its establishment.

3) The process of befriending the *lha klu* at the time of the construction of the monastery and the geographic situation of the great sacred mountains to the left and right of the Bsam gling monastery.

4) Information on the relationship between the lamas of the monastery with the principal lamas of other monasteries.

5) A map of Bsam gling and the historical development of the monastic colleges and the customary annual festivals.

6) A discussion of the sacred relics of the monastery.

7) The relationship between the lay and monastic communities.

’JAG ’DUL—A BON MOUNTAIN PILGRIMAGE IN DOLPO, NEPAL

MARIETTA KIND (ZURICH)

INTRODUCTION

This brief study of a specific mountain pilgrimage describes the process involved in its commencement and gives a short summary of the pilgrimage guide (*dkar chag*). The ‘opening of the door’ (*sgo phye ba*) to ’Jag ’dul is an example that illustrates the promotion of Bon in the area of Dolpo.

Dolpo is a northwestern district of Nepal that borders Tibet and is said to have once belonged to the ancient kingdom of Zhang zhung.[1] Later, jointly with the kingdom of Lo, it fell under the rule of Spu hrang, one of the principalities of the western Tibetan kingdom of Mnga’ ris.[2] For several centuries Dolpo remained in a pivotal position between the kingdoms of Ya tse (with the Khasa malla) and those of western Tibet.[3] At the end of the 18th century the Gorkha gained power over Kathmandu Valley and Kali Gandaki Valley, including Lo. Dolpo as its dependency fell under their authority. After the unification of Nepal in the 19th century, the ties with Lo were broken and a new border was established between Nepal and Tibet. The new fiscal authorities of Dolpo were accordingly based in Tripurakot (Tibrikot), in Jumla and today in Dunai.[4]

DESERTED VILLAGE IN THE HIDDEN VALLEY OF ’JAG ’DUL

The secluded valley of ’Jag ’dul is located in a remote side-valley in the westernmost part of Dolpo. In the early days, before the valley was

[1] Namgyal Nyima Dagkar (1997: 693) in his article on Zhang zhung according to Bon sources and as told in oral accounts in Dolpo.

[2] Jackson 1984: 10; Vitali 1996: 159ff.

[3] Heller forthcoming.

[4] Kind 2002: 12ff.

deserted, it used to be the location of a whole village comprising several houses, a small Bon dgon pa and some fields. Now all that remains are ruins left from the dgon pa and the village along with some stones carved with Bon and Buddhist sacred syllables.

According to oral sources, the founder of the Bon *dgon pa* was Nya sgom Blo gros rgyal mtshan, a descendant of the Nya rong lineage who had meditated on those meadows for over three years. Blo gros rgyal mtshan was the teacher of Tre ston Tshe dbang tshul khrims, an important person in the subsequent expansion of Bon in Dolpo. He not only stopped in ’Jag ’dul, he visited Smer phu, a small mountain retreat near the valley of Mdo rta rab, Srib phyogs, Shel ri hermitage and Spung mo,[5] where he paused for some time to teach disciples. Later he left for Kongpo Bonri in Tibet and never returned.

In those early days a trail winding through the high mountains connected ’Jag ’dul directly with the Bon monastery of Bsam gling[6] in upper Dolpo. Strong ties were maintained and the lamas responsible for ’Jag ’dul dgon pa all came from Bsam gling. This major centre of Bon in Dolpo was established by Yang ston Rgyal mtshan rin chen in the 13th century.[7]

According to the lamas of Bsam gling he also built a meditation chapel in ’Jag ’dul. His footprint imprinted on a rock is one of the sacred sites on the pilgrimage. To illustrate how close Bsam gling was in those days I was often told how the fresh buckwheat bread did not even cool down on the way from ’Jag ’dul to Bsam gling.

As a result of landslides that wiped out the main bridge and the boulder on which it was fixed, the trail to Bsam gling became inaccessible. Direct communication and trade between the two monasteries and villages grew difficult. The ’Jag ’dul village moved southwards to the village now known as Yul ri skor (or ’Ur bkod, Nep. Hurikot) while the deserted valley of ’Jag ’dul became a place for meditation and summer pastures. The villagers of Yul ri skor still used to maintain close links with Bsam gling, but there was no lama who could support the local Bonpo community full time. So they applied to the village Spung mo and to the main monastery in India to send a lama.

[5] Different spellings exist in local texts: Spung mo and Spud mo, pronounced *Pungmo*.

[6] Bsam gtan gling is locally called by its short form Bsam gling, pronounced *Samling*.

[7] Snellgrove 1967: 4 and Karmay 1998: 49–50.

About ten years ago *dge bshes* Bstan ’dzin nyi ma ’od zer from Spung mo was chosen. He moved to Yul ri skor and built G.yung drung ’gro ’dul gling dgon, which is popularly referred to as Duli *dgon pa*, the replacement of the ancient ’Jag ’dul *dgon pa*. Besides stimulating a number of Bonpo ceremonial activities and ritual dances (*’cham*), Nyi ma ’od zer also intensified the pilgrimage activities to ’Jag ’dul.

At present, different religious traditions are practised in the area of Bkag Yul ri skor, which includes the villages Bkag rgyal (Nep. Kaigaun), Yul ri skor (Nep. Hurikot) and Rimi. Shamanism is widespread.[8] Ethnically the inhabitants of Bkag Yul ri skor and its neighbourhood are on the cusp between Bodic groups speaking Tibetan dialects and the Magar, as well as a few hill castes (Chhetri, Bahun). The Valley of ’Jag ’dul is a major place of pilgrimage for all these groups: the shamans travel to the sacred lake where they fall into a trance and enter a dialogue with deities and spirits. The Hindus call the place ‘Jagdulla Baikunta’ (Skr. Vaikuṇṭha), the heaven where Viṣṇu lives. They search for traces of their gods Viṣṇu and Mahādeva. If they perform a pilgrimage and visit the sacred places it will take them to Indraloka, the heaven of Indra (the heaven of all the gods).[9] For the Bonpo the hidden land of ’Jag ’dul is a sacred place of Zhang zhung Me ri, a major tutelary deity closely associated with Zhang zhung. A visit to this sacred place of Me ri bestows many blessings and benefits. This will be described later in more detail. While the Bon po and the shamans still make yearly visits to the pilgrimage sites, no Hindu or Buddhist activities are currently to be found there.

Early Visitor to ’Jag ’dul

How was the hidden land of ’Jag ’dul opened up as a place of pilgrimage to the followers of the Bon tradition? Apart from a few hermits who meditated in the caves of ’Jag ’dul from very early times, the first main impetus for opening the area to pilgrimage came with the visit of Ka ru

[8] The *dhami* control some of the most powerful local deities. The growth of shamanism was particularly marked during the long periods in which there was no Bon lama. However, the Bon tradition has remained active, above all in Bkag Yul ri skor, and although shamanism and Hindu beliefs also exist these are mainly observed in the neighbouring village of Rimi and beyond.

[9] Cf. Nepali translation of the pilgrimage text by Lama and Thakali (1968).

Grub dbang Bstan 'dzin rin chen to Dolpo. The following description is based on oral accounts.

Ka ru Grub dbang of the Rgyal rmog sog po lineage was born in western Tibet in the vicinity of Ti se (Mount Kailash) in 1801.[10] He travelled to many different places and spent time in Glo, Se rib, Rgya rong, and Dol po, where he promulgated a new doctrinal system, the *Dmar khrid dug lnga rang grol*. Among the many different teachers who visited Dolpo, Ka ru Grub dbang Bstan 'dzin rin chen made a lasting impression on the spiritual life of Dolpo. Stories about him are rife. He visited many places in Tibet, not least his birthplace in western Tibet near Ti se, for which he wrote a well-known pilgrimage guidebook. Later his travels led him to Klu brag, a Bon community in Glo (Mustang). He remained in the village for a lengthy duration and founded the village temple, Phun tshogs gling.[11]

During his stay he encountered a poor woman with a young boy whose father had died. They were struggling to survive. Ka ru Grub dbang grew fond of them and decided to take care of the boy. The boy became his student and later turned into a renowned lama named 'Gro mgon Bstan 'dzin nyi ma.[12] Taking his young disciple by the hand, Ka ru Grub dbang left to journey to Dolpo. The two of them passed through Tshar kha, Srib phyogs, Smer phu, Par gle, Dung nyal (Nep. Dunai), 'Tibtu' (Nep. Tripurakot or Tibrikot) and Tsha lung before reaching Yul ri skor. All of the villages received them gladly and honored them with great hospitality. Ka ru Grub dbang performed rituals in exchange for turquoise, coral, *gzi* stones and silver. In one village he successfully tamed a very powerful and ill-tempered local deity that had caused illness and bad harvests.

On finally arriving at Yul ri skor and visiting 'Jag 'dul, Ka ru Grub dbang had a revelation concerning the Hidden Valley of 'Jag 'dul. He recognised it as a highly sacred place and predicted that his student Bstan 'dzin nyi ma would return at the age of fifty to formally inaugurate the pilgrimage (*sgo phye ba*) and write the pilgrimage guide (*dkar chag*).

[10] A written biography of Dkar ru Grub dbang Bstan 'dzin rin chen exists but I have not had a chance to get hold of it yet (see bibliography).

[11] Ramble and Kind 2003: 671.

[12] This account describing the early life of Bstan 'dzin nyi ma seems to be an amalgamation with the biography of Yang ston Bkra shis rgyal mtshan, also called 'Gro mgon Klu brag pa (Ramble and Kind 2003: 675 and Ramble 1984: 95ff).

Thereafter they continued their travels to Spung mo, where they bestowed a blessing on the new statues at Rnam rgyal *lha khang* founded by Tre ston Tshe dbang tshul khrims. Soon after they paid a visit to Mtsho (Nep. *Ringmo*). To this day, the belt of Ka ru Grub dbang is kept as a relic in the Phiuwä house at Mtsho village. The two lamas proceeded to Bsam gling, to Byi gcer.[13]

Opening 'Jag 'dul Pilgrimage

The following account of the 'opening' (*sgo phye ba*) of 'Jag 'dul is mainly based on the *dkar chag* of the hidden land *sbas yul* 'Jag 'dul gzha 'tshon 'od bar gling, written by 'Gro mgon Bstan 'dzin nyi ma in the year of the Earth Snake 1869. The guidebook consists of twelve folios with a missing first page and several corners damaged by vermin. In addition, local villagers from Bkag Yul ri skor have done a translation of this *dkar chag* into Nepali.[14] This offers complementary information on the missing introduction page of the Tibetan text. The Nepali version is interesting as it translates some of the Bon concepts into Hindu concepts and gives part of the Hindu view of the sacred place. Oral accounts supplement the description.

Bstan 'dzin nyi ma received his main spiritual education over a period of eight years from the age of five to the age of thirteen. Thereafter he practiced, studied the dharma, and meditated. Between the ages of 32 and 41 he remained in solitude meditating in a mountain cave and experienced several visions and revelations. When he finally reached the age of 50 the village elders of Bkag Yul ri skor sent for him to come and fulfill the prophecy of Ka ru Grub dbang. They reminded him that this powerful master had arrived there before and had a revelation: the local guardian, G.yung drung drag ldan, had given Ka ru Grub dbang an insight into the hidden place of shining rainbows (*sbas yul* Gzha' tshon 'od bar gling) with its many high gods, wisdom deities, *ḍāka*s and *ḍākiṇī*s, local deities and protectors.

Now the villagers requested Bstan 'dzin nyi ma to open up the pilgrimage route and write a short history of the sacred place of 'Jag 'dul.

---

[13] Several spellings exist: Byi gcer, Phyi mtsher, Byi cher, Bi cher, local pronunciation is Bicher.

[14] Cf. Sherab Lama and Shantaram Thakali, Kaigaun-Hurikot 1968.

Bstan 'dzin nyi ma was inspired by a feeling of great devotion and devised a plan to open up the place on the 15th day of the Monkey month (7th month) in the year of the Earth Snake (1869).

REVELATIONS AND INTRODUCTION INTO THE HIDDEN PLACE

On the 14th day Bstan 'dzin nyi ma began his journey from Yul ri skor and spent the night at Brag po che, the great cliff entry gate to 'Jag 'dul. In his dream, a frog as big as a male goat appeared and jumped at him. Bstan 'dzin nyi ma started to chase the frog with a big stick, when suddenly it spoke with a powerful human voice:

> Listen to me, practitioner, instead of presenting me with offerings you are chasing me away with a stick. Are you aware of who I am? I am the guardian of this sacred place (*gnas kyi zhing skyong*), my name is G.yung drung drag ldan, and I do not think that you are a genuine practitioner and know the true story of this place. How do you think you can write a *dkar chag*?

Having spoken thus, the frog disappeared into the rock cliff. Shortly afterwards, Bstan 'dzin nyi ma had another dream. The white woman Ral pa can appeared to him with her long hair and said:

> Listen! You are a very smart being, if you wish to write a *dkar chag* about this sacred place and want to receive the initiation you first need to make offerings to all the wisdom deities (*ye shes lha rnams*), gods (*lha*) and *nāga*s (*klu*), *ḍāka*s and *ḍākiṇī*s (*dpa' bo mkha' 'gro*), 'owners of the place' (*gzhi bdag*), and to the eight classes of violent deities (*sde brgyad*). You need to show devotion and become of one heart with the deities. You have to ask them not to beset your work with obstacles, harm or anger. Only then you can ask them to give you a revelation and reveal this sacred place to you. For seven days you should pay devotion to all the *ḍāka*s and *ḍākiṇī*s with your body, speech and mind altogether in single pointed concentration. You should meditate very hard and very carefully.

Then she disappeared and he woke up. He set out on his pilgrimage straight away so that no evil nightmare could follow on from this marvellous dream. At the place called Brag po che, the frog left a footprint in a big rock. It is honoured during the pilgrimage in the form of offerings and prayers to G.yung drung drag ldan and the account of the first revelation.

Bstan 'dzin nyi ma continued his journey and arrived at the 'joyful meadow of mankind' (*mi yul skyid thang*). There he honoured all of the deities, uttered the sacred syllables without interruption, made generous esoteric and mundane offerings, and stayed in single pointed meditation for seven days. All kinds of animals came to observe him: a bear, a snake, a tortoise, dogs, and even human beings tried to disturb his meditation. They were all manifestations of G.yung drung drag ldan, the guardian of the place, but despite the taunting, Bstan 'dzin nyi ma did not interrupt his meditation.

On the morning of the 21st day, another vision came. A very beautiful red woman with long braided hair appeared. She was adorned with a crown, a necklace and numerous bone ornaments. She was holding a *ḍamaru* drum and a Bon po bell (*rdar bsil rnams*). While she studied him from the corners of her eyes she said:

> Listen! You are a saint in the times of the evil era that is weighed down by negative emotions and misery. People burn forests, they hunt and kill animals using hunting dogs and poisoned arrows, making great noise and causing thunderous roars. The animals are forced to flee from this holy place. All the *nāga*s and *sa bdag* are angry and cause trouble for the human beings who are incapable of stopping their sinful behaviour. They are unable to accumulate merit by performing good deeds. But you, despite these evil times, have tried very hard and with great devotion. You bestowed great hopes on us, so we should help you, otherwise you will have to return empty-handed. Thus we will describe this holy place to you and you should listen with attention!

The red *ḍākiṇī* began to describe the place called 'Jag 'dul gzha 'tshon gling, the pacified area of shining rainbows. The chief mountain is called Me ri ral ba can. Me ri is a tutelary deity of the Bonpo. He is also often referred to as Dbal chen ge khod. Like Ge khod,[15] he is closely associated with the kingdom of Zhang zhung and thus he is frequently referred to simply as Zhang zhung Me ri. The principal mountain is around 7000m high and is referred to on Nepali Maps as 'Kanjiroba', a distortion of the local name Gangs chen Me ri ral ba.[16] The connecting lake is called Ting nam Ne slas mtsho, the lake of Dbal chen ge khod's wife Ting nam Ne slas rgyal mo.

[15] The word *ge khod* designates an old class of ancient Tibetan gods who are said to reside on Mount Ti se, the sacred mountain of Zhang zhung. The tutelary deity Dbal chen ge khod is also believed to reside on Mount Ti se (Kvaerne 1995: 80–84).

[16] Amy Heller heard yet another etymology of the mountains name in upper Dolpo: Gangs chen ras pa, 'the cotton-clad yogin of the glaciers'. This name exemplifies the Buddhist interpretation of the mountain probably pointing to the cotton-clad Mila, the famous yogi Mi la ras pa of the *Bka' rgyud* order.

There are four 'cosmic maṇḍala meadows' (*ma 'dal srid pa'i thang*): the 'blissful meadow', the 'joyful meadow of mankind', the meadow of the *nāga*s, and the meadow of the gods. There are also four snow mountains and four lakes. Their water can cleanse all diseases and the four streams will eliminate contamination, poison and defilement. Concealed in four different crags are hidden treasures (*gter ma*). One of them holds gold that will be discovered after 500 years and will be used to build seven Bon monasteries. Leading to the four meadows are four steep slopes, which are stairways to paradise and to a favourable rebirth.

Anyone who meditates at one of the four sacred meditation places of accomplished masters can achieve spiritual realisation very swiftly. One can find four sacred imprints (*zhabs rjes*)—signs of powerful meditation, as well as four very perfect naturally formed images (*rang byon*). There are four bone reliquaries (*gdung rten*)—shrines containing relics of former masters. From the time of the past Buddha to the time of the present Buddha Gshen rab mi bo, many teachers and practitioners have abided in 'Jag 'dul and bestowed their blessings on this sacred place.

The main masters who have left their traces at 'Jag 'dul are Dran pa nam mkha', 'Od ldan 'bar ma, Klu grub Ye shes nying po, Stang chen mu tsa, a student of Dran pa nam mkha, and Ha ra ci par. Later practitioners were Lta'u Nyi ma rgyal mtshan, Nya sgom Smon lam rgyal mtshan, Yang ston Rgyal mtshan rin chen, and Tre ston Tshe dbang tshul khrims who has established several Bon monasteries in Dolpo.[17] Whoever visits the sacred sites of these former masters will encounter unlimited purity and will be granted success in their work. The past, present and future Buddhas, known locally as Ha ri ston pa, Mar khu ston pa and 'Gyi'u (?) ston pa, dwell in three eternal mountains for all time.

Having climbed all four steep slopes and visited the different meadows, one will reach the base of the great mountain Gangs chen Me ri ral ba, the dwelling place of Me ri the subduer of demons. He is the majestic manifestation of the deity, surrounded by flames and causing demons to declare their submission. On his left is the beautiful high mountain of his great consort E las rgyal mo, the queen of liberation, while at the base of the mountain we find the lake of his second con-

[17] Kind 2002: 13–16.

sort, the great Ne slas rgyal mo, the queen of mystic union. She is also sometimes referred to as the 'queen of the created world' Srid pa'i rgyal mo, the chief among the protectors of Bon.[18]

The turquoise lake of Ne slas rgyal mo assumes three different colours during the course of one day. In the morning it is white. Whoever drinks of it and washes at that time can eliminate all sins, contamination and harming spirits. Whoever drinks of it and washes at noontime when it turns green will attain longevity and good fortune. In the evening the lake turns black. Whoever drinks at that time can pacify all evil beings and eliminate obstacles. The lake is the main aim of the pilgrimage. People gather at the shore, prostrate themselves towards Gangs chen Me ri ral ba and his two consorts, say prayers and drink the purifying water. They fill bottles with the sacred water to bring home to the family members and friends who could not undertake the pilgrimage themselves.

Besides listing all of the sacred sites in 'Jag 'dul, the red *ḍākiṇī* also gave a description of each, explaining what specific benefits can be gained at each site if the right actions and offerings are performed. During the pilgrimage, the lay people stop at each site, make offerings of flowers, food and water, and circumambulate it while uttering their prayers.

After her detailed portrait, the red *ḍākiṇī* concluded by saying:

> This is the wonderful hidden land of rainbows, the high holy place of the past, present and future time where all the deities, *ḍākas* and *ḍākiṇīs*, guardians and *nāgas* reside and where the joyful ones have reached enlightenment. Whoever meditates here with great devotion can reach the western lotus flower paradise (*pad ma rgyas pa'i zhing khams*) and meet all the *ḍākas* and *ḍākiṇīs* there. It is a great, miraculous and holy site that is equal to the holy places of Gangs Ti se and Mtsho Ma pham (Mt Kailash and Lake Manasarovar).

Having thus spoken, she disappeared like a bird without a trace. After that Bstan 'dzin nyi ma wrote down the description of the sacred place for the benefit of the future generations.

---

[18] In a thangka of Me ri described by Kvaerne (1995: 100ff) two consorts are shown, which Kvaerne identifies as the queens Nam mkha'i o slas and Ne slas srid pa'i rgyal mo. In his description of Zhang zhung Me ri (1995: 86) translated from the *Me ri gsang ba dpa' bo gyad phur gyi sgrub thabs mngon par rtogs pa zab lam gnad kyi 'khor lo* it says: "On his right is the Mother of 'liberation', Namkhé Wölé, of dark red color,

Pilgrimage Activities Today

To this day the pilgrimage is highly popular among the Bon community in Dolpo. Each summer the villagers set out to circumambulate the sacred sites. Usually the local lama will lead the pilgrim group. He reads from the *dkar chag* at the main sites along the pilgrimage route and explains the history of the places according to the text—supplemented with the knowledge transmitted by oral tradition. The group climbs the four steep slopes, rests and makes offerings at the four meadows, and drinks the water of the four lakes and the four streams. All the local deities dwelling in the area, the wisdom deities, and the traces of the great lamas who have meditated here are honoured with different offerings, sacred syllables and incense. Finally, after cleansing their sins at the different sites and squeezing their way through purificatory rock formations, the villagers pay homage to the great Zhang zhung Me ri and his two consorts.

> A local informant describes why this is such a holy place: "It is a very sacred place because all the Buddhas reside here. At night there are many stars in the sky, they are the eyes of the *nāga*s. The wisdom deities, *ḍāka*s and *ḍākiṇīs* all dwell in the snow mountains and in the rocky hill areas, just like the fog and the clouds on the mountains. The grass hill area is covered with medicinal flowers, which radiate like illuminating and bright clarifying blossoms. Here at this peaceful place offerings can be made to all those beings, and these will help to eliminate one's obstacles. 'Jag 'dul is a place of pilgrimage as great as Mount Kailash that also is a sacred place of Me ri. The same benefits can be attained, so one does not actually need to go to Kailash.

Especially in the snake years (last time in 2001) people set out from the various villages to visit the hidden valley of 'Jag 'dul.

---

adorned with tresses of a hundred thousand 'fire-crystals'. She holds a dagger in her hand and has a conch-white tortoise as her throne. On his left is the Mother of 'union', Nelé Sipé Gyalmo, of dark yellow colour, adorned with tresses of blazing golden light. She offers a skull filled with blood to the Father. They are locked in embrace so that they are one. She has a fierce black bear as her throne".

Conclusion

This example of the founding of a pilgrimage route illustrates a process that can be seen in different parts of Dolpo, in which a valley is transformed into a meaningful place for the followers of Bon. It also shows how lamas from Tibet travelling via Lubra played an important role in promulgating Bon in the area. Yang ston Rgyal mtshan rin chen,[19] who came to Dolpo via Lubra, was the first important lama to promulgate Bon and have a long-lasting influence. It was he who established Bsam gling dgon pa, the major centre of Bon in Dolpo. Ka ru Grub dbang, who was originally from Tibet, also stayed in Lubra for a lengthy period of time before he travelled through Dolpo, where he left a strong impression. Several important teachers of Bon in Dolpo originally came from Tibet or Lubra. The history of many places in Dolpo seems to indicate that the Bon tradition was introduced via Lubra in the east of the district, which also makes sense in terms of the historical connection between the two areas. Even if the political dependence shifted to Jumla and Dunai in the course of history, the religious relationship of the Bonpo in Dolpo remained for a long time with Tibet and Lubra. Only recently the religious orientation shifted towards the newly established Bon monasteries in the Tibetan exile in India and in Kathmandu. However, many questions, especially the timing of events, remain unanswered and it will need some more research to date events and discover the settling patterns of Dolpo.

[19] Karmay 1998:49–50.

Bibliography

Works in Tibetan/ Nepali

Dka ru Grub dbang bstan 'dzin rin chen. 1845. *Dpal snya chen rig 'dzin mchog gi rnam sprul ba'i'u ldong btsun grub pa'i dban phyug bstan 'dzin rin chen rgyal mtshan bde chen snying po can gyi rnam par thar pa rmad byung yon tan yid bzin nor bu'i gter*. Dolanji, P.O. Ochghat (via Solan) H.P. 1974, India: Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre.

'Gro mgon Bstan 'dzin nyi ma. 1869. *'Jag 'dul gzha' tshon 'od bar gling dkar chag*. 'Jag 'dul, Dolpo, Nepal. Photos of handwritten manuscript in *dbu med*.

Gshen rab Bla ma and Shantaram Thakali. 1968 [1869]. Jagdul Tirta. Translation of *'Jag 'dul gzha' tshon gling dkar chag* by 'Gro mgon Bstan 'dzin nyi ma into Nepali. Kaigaun-Hurikot, Dolpo Nepal. Photocopy of handwritten manuscript.

Works in European Languages

Heller, A. (forthcoming). *The Illuminated Manuscripts of Byi cher. a Cultural History of Dolpo.*

Jackson, D.P. 1984. *The Mollas of Mustang*. Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works & Archives.

Karmay, S.G. 1998. *The Little Luminous Boy—the Oral Tradition from the Land of Zhang zhung depicted on two Tibetan Paintings*. Bangkok: White Orchid Press.

Kind, M. 2002. *Mendrub—a Bonpo Ritual for the Benefit of all Living Beings and the Empowerment of Medicine Performed in Tsho, Dolpo*. Kathmandu: WWF Nepal.

Kværne, P. 1995. *The Bon Religion of Tibet—the Iconography of a Living Tradition*. London: Serindia Publications.

Nyima Dagkar, N. 1997. sTag gzig and Zhang zhung in Bon sources. *In* E. Steinkellner and H. Krasser (eds) *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 7th Seminar of the International Association of Tibetan Studies, Graz 1995*. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 687–700.

Ramble, C. 1984. The Lamas of Lubra: Tibetan Bonpo Priests in Western Nepal. D.Phil. thesis, Oxford University.

Ramble, C. and M. Kind. 2003. Bonpo monasteries and temples of the Himalayan region. *In* S. Karmay and Y. Nagano (eds) *A Survey of Bonpo Monasteries and Temples in Tibet and the Himalaya.* Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology, 669–752.

Snellgrove, D.L. 1967. *The Nine Ways of Bon—Excerpts from gZi-brjid*. London: Oxford University Press.

Vitali, R. 1996. *The Kingdoms of Gu ge Pu hrang according to mNga' ris rgyal rabs by Gu ge mkhan chen Ngag dbang grags pa.* Dharamsala: *Tho ling gtsug lag khang lo gcig stong 'khor ba'i rjes dran mdzad sgo'i go sgrig tshogs chung.*



Plate 1: Ruins of old ’Jag ’dul *dgon pa*



Plate 2: Dge bshes Nyi ma 'od zer reading and explaining from the *'Jag 'dul dkar chag*; Mt Gangs chen Me ri ral ba is in the background



Plate 3: Dge bshes Nyi ma 'od zer and Marietta Kind on 'Jag 'dul pilgrimage with Gangs chen Me ri ral ba in the background



Plate 4: Dge bshes Nyi ma 'od zer clearing leaves from rock imprint of sTang chen Mu tsha gyer med's body

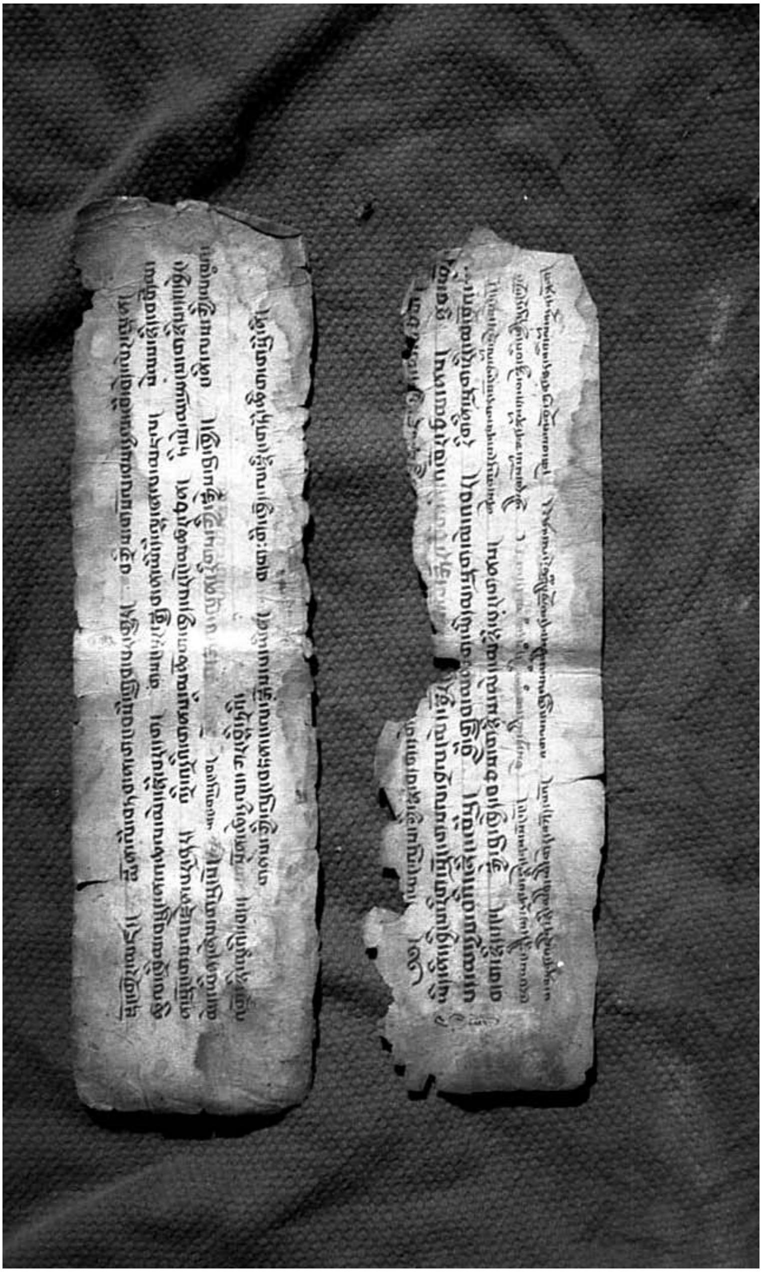


Plate 5: *'Jag 'dul dkar chag* by 'Gro mgon Bstan 'dzin nyi ma

SOCIO-ECONOMIC ORGANISATION OF VILLAGE COMMUNITIES AND MONASTERIES IN SPITI, H.P., INDIA: THE CASE OF A RELIGIOUS ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT (*CHOS GZHIS*)*

CHRISTIAN JAHODA (VIENNA)

Buddhist monks and monastic communities from the earliest time onwards have always depended on material support by lay people, yet this has rarely been investigated by social anthropologists.[1] Historically, different models have been developed to organise this support on a regular and steady basis.[2]

Based on the example of Tabo in lower Spiti valley (see Map) I here attempt to reconstruct the local system of support which seems to have been practised since the foundation of the monastery in the late 10th century until the second half of the 20th century. Due to limitations of space I concentrate here mainly on the period from the mid-19th to mid-20th century. Introductory remarks on Tabo village and monastery are followed by a short historical outline of the area beginning with the Buddhist transformation of western Tibet in the late 10th century and its implications for the socio-economic organisation of village communities and monasteries during later periods.

Since the middle of the 19th century, the existence of a special administrative unit in Spiti named *chos gzhis* is known which provided the framework for the economic relationship between major monaster-

* The research for this article was made possible by a grant from the University of Vienna and the Austrian *Fonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung* (FWF). For helpful remarks on earlier versions of this paper I would like to thank Thomas Kintaert, Amy Heller and Giacomella Orofino.

[1] Major works contributing to the formulation of new concepts in this field have been Goldstein 1968, 1971a, 1971b and 1971c, Clarke 1980, Grimshaw 1983 and Tsarong 1987.

[2] Fundamental studies of these models as practised in ancient India and China have been made by Bareau 1961 and Gernet 1956, respectively, complemented by Miller 1961 for spheres under Tibetan influence. More recently, editions of Tibetan historiographical texts (e.g. *Dba' bzhed, Mnga' ris rgyal rabs*) have provided scholars with additional accounts regarding the socio-economic organisation of important Tibetan Buddhist monasteries such as Bsam yas and Tho gling at the time of their foundation (cf. Wangdu and Diemberger 2000, Vitali 1996).

ies (including Tabo) and related lay populations dispersed all over the Spiti valley. The basic elements constituting this unit and its political context are analysed on the basis of written sources (19th century settlement reports, travel accounts, local documents) and field research conducted by the author in the area since 1997. In the course of these investigations into the history of the socio-economic organisation of Tabo village and monastery hitherto unknown documents were found pertaining to the economic relationship between the monastery of Tabo and the lay Buddhist population of this and other villages in Spiti valley during the third quarter of the 20th century. These documents are the latest evidence for a special system of economic support for the monastery by a particular class of landholding peasants (*khral pa*, lit. 'tax-payers') before it came to an end during the 1970s as a result of the overall transformation of the administrative and socio-economic order in Spiti.

Tabo village and monastery

Tabo[3] village is situated at ca. 3,100 m above sea level on the left bank of the Spiti river in lower Spiti valley. According to the family register of the Panchayat Tabo, in 1998, the village population counted 298 inhabitants who lived in 50 separate households recognised as members of the local village community.[4] This number included 28 monks living in two buildings adjacent to the monastery compound but excluded a number of 'outsiders' resident in Tabo for shorter or longer periods, i.e. people from lower areas mostly employed in various government departments as well as seasonal or permanent labour migrants from other parts of Spiti, neighbouring districts such as Kinnaur and even from Nepal.

[3] The name of the village appears in various forms in Tibetan script in inscriptions, manuscripts and documents (cf. Steinkellner and Luczanits 1997: 259, n. 2, Jahoda 2003: 348f.). Following official Indian publications and in accordance with Steinkellner's statement that "the proper old spelling of modern Tabo and the etymology of the name are unclear" (*ibid.*), the modern spelling of the village name is used throughout this paper.

[4] These registers kept by the Panchayat secretary classify the local people further according to sex (147 male, 151 female) and membership to 'scheduled tribe' (ST, 237 persons: 137 male, 136 female) or 'scheduled caste' (SC, 25 persons: 10 male, 15 female).

The village population can be divided into three main classes:

(1) The people belonging to eight *khang chen* (lit. 'big house') households, i.e. the *khral pa* of the 19th and 20th century. The number of these households has remained the same since 1951 and most probably for decades before. Nowadays, these households own about half of the cultivated land of the village,[5] and they are almost exclusively the owners of ploughing tools and related animals (*mdzo*). In addition, they control the access to the water necessary for irrigation. Until 1993, the village headman (*rgad po*) was elected from among the heads of these households. Primogeniture and a monomarital marriage pattern (cf. Goldstein 1968: 57) (with polyandry accounting for 10–20 per cent of marriages during the last 10 years) are characteristic for this group.

(2) The people belonging to the group of *khang chung* (lit. 'small house') households. The number of these households has risen to 40 in 1998 as compared to only eleven in 1951 according to records in the office of the land registration officer (*patwari*) in charge of Tabo. These households own small plots of land and earn the major part of their income through wage labour. Their practice (less their views) concerning rules of inheritance and marriage deviates from that of the *khang chen* in that way that it appears to lead to a more or less equal division of property at least among male heirs. Marriage relationships between these two groups are rare.

The members of these two groups who make up the 'scheduled tribe' category used by the Indian administration call themselves Rajputs in terms of the Indian caste system while in the local village context and in their own language (Spi ti skad)[6] they still call themselves 'Chazang' (*cha bzang*?) or 'Chayang' (*cha g.yang*?).[7] The

[5] In 1998, the total village area of Tabo amounted to 230.76 ha divided into 758 plots of land. Only 40.96 ha was cultivated land of which 26.02 ha was under crop (wheat, barley, potatoes, beans, peas, lentils, etc.) and the rest (14.94 ha) used as orchards (mainly for the production of apples). (The villagers usually indicate the size of their fields cultivated with grain in terms of the amount of seed necessary which is expressed in *khal* and *bre*. The size of the fields is also expressed in terms of *bigha*, a land measure already in use in the 19th century.)

[6] According to recent linguistic research, the "dialect of Tabo [...] belongs to the group of 'Western Innovative Tibetan'" (Hein 2001: 35).

[7] This process of adapting the identity to a new social and political context has been observed already during the 19th century for the Buddhist and Tibetan-speaking populations of the wider area (cf. Rose 1919 II: 456). In a modern Indian publication, these two classes of the local population are therefore designated as "Chazhang (Rajput Bodh, the agriculturist class)" (Sarkar 1996: 113).

monks in Tabo monastery come exclusively from among these two groups.

(3) Families of blacksmiths-musicians (*bzo ba*) belong to classes of people designated by the majority as *phyi pa* ('outsiders'). Until 1998, a system of labour division was in force within the village which was based on the exchange of grain produced by the *khang chen* group against the repair of agricultural tools by the blacksmith families (cf. Jahoda 2003: 320f.).

The Buddhist monastery of Tabo is situated in the eastern part of the village. The old monastic complex, with the *gtsug lag khang* in the centre of the sacred compound (*chos 'khor*), consists of nine temples "built between the late 10th and the *c*. 17th century" (Klimburg-Salter 1997: 21) and a number of *mchod rten*. (These monuments belong to the Government of India, and the Archaeological Survey of India is in charge of their preservation.) During the last three decades, a new temple, a monks' hostel (*grwa tshang*) and other buildings (kitchen, restaurant, guest house, school, etc.) have been added outside the *chos 'khor*. Since at least the late 15th century, Tabo monastery has been under the control of the Dge lugs pa order while "at other times in the last 1,000 years the rNying-ma-pa, the bKa'-gdams-pa and the Sa-skya-pa were present in the monastery" (*dge bshes* Bsod nams dbang 'dus, present abbot of the monastery, cited in *ibid*.: 19, n. 16).

Until the 1950s when the then *bla ma khri pa* handed over most of the monastery's land to the peasants, the monastery had been the biggest landowner in Tabo. Except for communal village land (*yul spyi*),[8] the rest of the cultivated area belonged to the group of eight *khral pa* households.[9] The economic relationship between the monastery and the lay population during the 19th century until the third quarter of the 20th century was based on a predominantly agricultural economy which seems to have been characteristic not only for the lay population of Tabo but all the households belonging to the *chos gzhis*. The various dues and donations handed over by the lay population to the monastery were delivered primarily in kind throughout that time.

[8] In 19th- and early-20th-century settlement reports, the word 'shámilát' (Hindi *śāmilāt*) was used for common lands (held in partnership) in a village (cf. Lyall 1874: 134–35, *Gazetteer of the Simla Hill States* 1910 2.A: 66).

[9] For 1951, the records in the office of the *patwari* in Poh list nine individual landowners holding 23.11 ha land. Of these the monastery was the biggest owner holding over 38 per cent of the land which was cultivated by eleven tenants (in a few cases identical with the landholding households).

Mainly due to development programs funded by the Himachal Pradesh and Central Government of India, the economic system in Spiti (as well as in neighbouring Upper Kinnaur) has changed considerably during the last decades and especially during the last 15 years.[10] This concerns especially the agricultural activities of the lay village communities whose predominantly subsistence-oriented production has been increasingly reduced in importance against a market-oriented production of cash crops (mainly seed potatoes, beans and apples) (cf. Rizvi 1987, Vaidya 1998 and Jahoda 2003: 331–34). In Tabo, this development led to the abandonment of a system of support for the monastery (i.e. the individual monks and the monk community) by the lay population based primarily on local agricultural production. On the other hand, Tabo monastery has managed to find new sources of income which are not based on direct ownership of fields or the levying of taxes from the lay population: today, the monastery runs a guest-house, a shop, a restaurant, gets subsidies and support by various government departments as well as foreign sponsors. Therefore, the monastery no longer requires to collect taxes from the lay village population although it still receives donations from Tabo village and the neighbouring villages of Lari and Poh. These three villages not only constitute the local administrative Panchayat unit but also the 'sponsoring communities' of Tabo monastery. In that regard, they are also referred to as Cog la yul gsum, the three villages of Cog la—Cog la being the name of an administrative unit of the kingdom of Gu ge in the late 10th and early 11th century according to inscriptions and historical sources.[11] Presently, this name is still used by the trance-medium of the monastery's most important female protective deity (Rdo rje chen mo).[12]

---

[10] Cf. the account by Lamb 1956 regarding the change of the administrative system in the early 1950s. For the aims and measures of these programs with regard to Spiti and Kinnaur, see Bhatnagar, Sharma and Sharma 1980 and Sharma, Bhati and Thakur 1990–91, respectively. Critical evaluations of the development programs in effect between the 1960s and 1990s are contained in Guleria 1987, Singh 1989 and Sanan 1997.

[11] Variant spellings are: Cog la or Spi Lcog, Spi ti Spi cog, Spi ti Lcog la, Spyi sde Lcog la or Lcog la'i sde (cf. *Rgya bod yig tshang* 215.18–216.4, *Gdung rabs* 182.2, *La dwags rgyal rabs* 35.17–35.18, Petech 1997: 252, n. 20). The phrases "Pil Cog Rta po" in Nyang Ral Nyi ma 'od zer's *Chos 'byung me tog snying po'i sbrang rtsi'i bcud* (Meisezahl 1985: 500b) and "Pi tir Ta po Cog la rgyan" in *Mnga' ris rgyal rabs* (54.9–10) are the earliest textual evidence that Tabo belonged to this administrative unit. Cf. Dge rgan 1976 (182, n. 2) for a 20th-century etymological explanation of Spi ti spi cog.

[12] Cf. Jahoda (in print) for a discussion of the evidence for this deity from art history

Early Buddhist Transformation of Western Tibet

Together with the foundation of monastic complexes in western Tibet, their economic basis as well as basic structures of socio-economic organisation were established: in the case of Tho gling, founded in AD 996 by the royal (*lha*) *bla ma* Ye shes 'od who is also responsible for the foundation of Tabo[13] (in all probability in the same year, cf. Klimburg-Salter 1997: 46 and Petech 1997: 233), we have the following account:

> In the fire male monkey year [i.e. 996], the foundations of Tho.gling gtsug.lag.khang in Gu.ge were laid out. In the earth male dragon year [i.e. 1028], the great renovation [...] of the gtsug.lag.khang was completed [...]. Materials for worship, man-power, goods and estates were regularly provided [to maintain Tho.gling]. (Vitali 1996: 109, my additions; cf. *Mnga' ris rgyal rabs* 53.7–11).

In another passage, the material support for the monastery and its monks is mentioned in more detail:

> Since estates requiring one thousand khal-s and ten nyag.ma-s to be cultivated are to be awarded to the head monastery Tho.gling for the provision of the monks' meals and for worship as well as the provisions of clothing and money, and since the nomads of the land have to give, from their own resources, salt and the equivalent of [such] field crops to the monks, *no one can avoid these duties*, which have been assigned as long as the sun and moon will exist. (Vitali 1996: 111, my emphasis; cf. *Mnga' ris rgyal rabs* 56.3–7).

The Buddhist transformation of western Tibet (including Spiti) appears to have been mainly related to the person of Ye shes 'od who also seems to have been responsible for the establishment of the basic structure of

---

(paintings in various temples between the 11th and 18th century), inscriptions and other textual sources, and oral tradition.

[13] In 1990, the murals of the old *sgo khang* in Tabo monastery were cleaned by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) which enabled Christian Luczanits to identify the images of Ye shes 'od and his two sons through the accompanying captions (cf. Luczanits 1999: 97, 105, pl. 9). Since 1989, art historians and philologists from or affiliated with Vienna University have been conducting intensive field research in Tabo on the paintings, inscriptions and manuscripts in the *gtsug lag khang*. See Klimburg-Salter 1997: 14–17 for an overview of the history of these research campaigns. For publications resulting from these research projects, see the contributions and bibliographic references in *East and West* 1994 (XLIV,1) ("Tabo Studies I"), Klimburg-Salter 1997, Petech and Luczanits 1999, Scherrer-Schaub and Steinkellner 1999, Steinkellner 2000 and Klimburg-Salter, Tropper and Jahoda forthcoming.

the socio-economic organisation of the peasantry and nomads around Tho gling and other areas under his control.[14] By comparison with Tho gling and based on the fact that he was also the founder of Tabo monastery, we can assume with high probability that the production of agricultural estates held by households of peasant cultivators was assigned to support Tabo monastery at least structurally in the same way as described for Tho gling.

The political, religious and economic development in Tabo and Spiti until the late 17th century cannot be dealt with here.[15] Basically, there is little one can say about this period with regard to the economic relationship between Tabo monastery and the surrounding lay populations except that despite a change of religious affiliation (at some time Sa skya pa, since the second half of the 15th century Dge lugs pa) the basic socio-economic order in the area around Tabo designed to support the monks and the monastery obviously was not the subject of any major changes or upheavals. At least, so far we do not have any evidence to this effect.

Return of Spiti to Ladakh and Establishment of the *Chos gzhis*

After the war between Ladakh and Tibet of 1679–1683, Spiti which had been under the control of Ladakh since ca. 1630 returned to the political control of the central Tibetan government for a few years, at least until 1687. After that time it returned again to the political control of the kingdom of Ladakh while a smaller part forming a religious administrative unit remained under the control of political and religious (Dge lugs pa) authorities based in central Tibet, i.e. until 1705 the regent Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho in Lha sa, and after 1728 in southwestern Tibet, i.e. the *paṇ chen bla ma* and *lo chen* Rin chen bzang po in Bkra shis lhun po (see below): the name of this unit was *chos gzhis*, as it is consistently designated in mid-19th century sources.[16]

[14] This is in accordance with Petech's view that "[...] we may suppose that Guge proper with its centre Tholing was organised as a sort of theocratical estate or feudal chiefship governed by Ye-shes-'od and his sons [...]." (Petech 1997: 235).

[15] Cf. Jahoda 2003: 120–32 for a preliminary outline of the development during this period.

[16] In reports by British settlement officers the designations 'Chuji' (Hay 1851: 446), 'Chujeh' (*ibid.*: 449–50) and '*Chuzî*' (Lyall 1874: 182) are used for this administrative unit. Recently, Tibetan documents most probably originating from Spiti

The driving forces behind and circumstances of the return of the greater part of Spiti under the political control of Ladakh as well as the exact date are not clear and need further investigation. Although it seems highly probable, due to missing evidence, it is also not possible to state with certainty whether this religious administrative unit was established—presumably on the basis of a pre-existing unit (corresponding to medieval Cog la?)—at the same time and in the form it appears in the 19th century. One can assume, however, that the decisions in both matters were related with one another and that the establishment of the *chos gzhis* which guaranteed the continuation of support for the major Dge lugs pa and other monasteries of the area was the precondition for the return of the rest of Spiti under the political control of the kingdom of Ladakh.

Regarding the transfer of Spiti to Ladakh, we have three accounts with different content. One is contained in a treaty concluded in 1753 in Wam le (also known as Hanle) between Phun tshogs rnam rgyal, the king of Ladakh, and Bkra shis rnam rgyal, the king of Purig, who were in conflict over a number of issues, one of these being the supremacy over Spiti. This treaty was mediated by Rig ’dzin Tshe dbang nor bu, a Rnying ma pa *bla ma* from eastern Tibet, deputed for that purpose to western Tibet by the 7th Dalai Lama. Two further accounts were recorded by Joseph Cunningham in 1841–42 as popular oral traditions on the borders of western Tibet.[17]

According to the king of Ladakh, whose view is reported in the treaty of Wam le, Spiti was given to Ladakh for entertaining its guests from Kashmir during the time of king Lha bzang (Schwieger 1999: 122, 202) or Lajang Khan (r. 1705–1717, cf. Petech 1977: 87). In a passage from a different version of the same treaty, Spiti is mentioned to have been demanded by Ladakh from the central Tibetan government for its benefit (Schwieger 1999: 123, 203). These arguments were brought forward by the king of Ladakh in support of his view that Spiti belonged to Ladakh (and not to Purig). Nevertheless, the contrary seems to have been agreed upon in the treaty (cf. *ibid*.: 160, 243). Therefore, between 1734 and 1758 Spiti, at least nominally, seems to have belonged to the kingdom of Purig.

---

have been found in a museum in Lahore. In these documents, reference is made to the *chos gzhis* (cf. Scherrer-Schaub in print).

[17] Cf. Jahoda 2003: 73–74 for information on the background of his mission.

One of the accounts recorded by Joseph Cunningham (and later cited by A. Cunningham [1854: 322] and repeated by A. Harcourt [1871, repr. 1972: 41]) relates the return of Spiti to Ladakh with a marriage concluded after the war of 1679–83:

> The Lassa force advanced and expelled the Ladakhees [from Gu ge], but as the Chaprang [Rtsa hreng / rang] family was extinct, the Lassa authorities retained the country in their own hands. A treaty was formed with the Ladakh Raja, and he married a daughter of the Lassa commander. The district of Pitti [Spiti] was given to Ladakh as the bride's dower, and 20 houses in the neighbourhood of Menser or Misser were added to it. [...] The whole of the above is the common story only, and the events are said to have taken place towards the beginning of the last [i.e. 18th] century with regard to the possession of Pitti. (Cunningham 1844: 231; my additions).

This as well as the other account "that it [Spiti] was given to Ladakh, on the occasion of one of the sons of the Raja becoming the Grand Lama" (*ibid.*: 231) are not supported by documents or other written evidence.

In a manuscript by H.L. Shuttleworth[18] entitled 'History of Spiti' kept in the British Library (OIOC, MSSEurD722/25) reference is made to a "long and somewhat discursive treaty made at Rtsa-brang in Gu-ge in A.D. 1772 between Ladakh and Bashahr, in which Lhasa was also an interested party". According to Shuttleworth, this document which is not at our disposal and may be identical with "the treaty between Lhasa and Bashahr" mentioned by Francke[19] (1914: 119) contains the following information on the history of the *chos gzhis*:

> From A.D. 1650, the main Dge-lugs-pa monasteries of Ki, Dan-mkhar and Rta-bo, with their lands, scattered throughout the main valley, were as we now learn from this treaty, subject to Lhasa and not to Ladakh. These lands are represented today by the fourteen villages between Losar and Rta-bo, which form the fifth Spiti division, or kothi, called Chozhi [...].

[18] Shuttleworth who is known as author of *Lha-luṅ Temple*, *Spyi-ti* (Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India, No. 39, Calcutta 1929) was Assistant Commissioner in Kulu in 1917–19 and 1923–24. According to information given in the appendix of his manuscript, Shuttleworth visited Spiti in the summer of 1917, 1918 and 1924.

[19] In 1909, Francke obtained two copies of this treaty, one being copied from a MS in the hands of the *rdzong dpon* of Tsaparang (Rtsa hreng / rang), the other from a MS in private possession in Namgya (Snam / Rnam rgya) in Upper Kinnaur (Francke 1914: 119). It was possibly this MS which was copied by Giuseppe Tucci in Namgya in 1933 and later published by Petech (1947).

Unless this document is available, it is difficult to judge whether Shuttleworth's information is correct, especially regarding the date given, and what this means exactly with regard to the status of the lay village populations, their relationship towards the monasteries and other authorities. This piece of information at least suggests that in the 18th and early 19th century the area referred to as *chos gzhis* was constituted by these three Dge lugs pa monasteries or rather the land under their control. This is in accordance with the accounts by British agents, travellers, military and settlement officers who visited Spiti between the early 1820s and late 1840s. They clearly indicate that a part of Spiti was under the jurisdiction of the central Tibetan government represented by the incarnation of *lo chen* Rin chen bzang po[20] whose seat was in Kyi monastery and mention further that the subjects of this unit until 1838 even paid taxes[21] to Tho gling, the Buddhist religious centre of West Tibet since its foundation in the late 10th century.[22]

The *Chos gzhis* During the 19th and 20th Century

Throughout the time under British rule (1846–1947), the *chos gzhis* was one of five administrative units of Spiti, itself a sub-division of Kulu. The existence of these other four districts—usually referred to as 'khál-

[20] "The Lassan government, at least that of Chan-than [Byang thang, the 'Northern Plain', is used by Trebeck here with regard to Gu ge and other areas of Mnga' ris skor gsum], claims a jurisdiction over the southeastern part of Piti, and a Lama, on the part of that province, resides at Kih [Kyi] Gonpa, a day's journey from Trankar [Dankhar]. The larger part of the district is, however, subject to Ladakh, and perhaps its political authority is extended to the whole, the charge of the Lama being religious rather than secular. It is said to have been formerly included in Bisahar [Bashahr], subsequent to the Lassan conquest of Chan-than, since when Lassa has subjugated no part of Ladakh." (Trebeck 1841: 67; my additions).

[21] "Before 1839 the revenues [of Spiti] from time within memory, was always paid to the Rájá of Ladak, [...]. And to China (from 50 families settled in Spiti) about 200 lacs of grain. This revenue to China has been discontinued for the last 12 years; but, before my arrival, some Chinese were sent from Tolung [Tho gling] to demand the ancient tribute." (Hay 1851: 438; my additions).

[22] The relationship between Tho gling and other monasteries associated with *lo chen* Rin chen bzang po and his *bka' srung* Rdo rje chen mo (such as Tabo) seems to have begun in the early 11th century (cf. Klimburg-Salter 1997: 79, Vitali 1999: 24). In later centuries, this relationship has been continued by his incarnations belonging to the Dge lugs pa order who had their seat (*pho brang*) in the monasteries of Bkra shis lhun po and Kyi (Dkyil) in Spiti. Since the 18th century, they were almost always found in villages of lower Spiti and Upper Kinnaur (cf. Vitali 2000: 87–88, Jahoda 2003: 139, n. 129, Jahoda in print).

sa kothís' by the British settlement officers[23]—was first noticed by W.C. Hay in 1849/50 (Hay 1851: 436).[24] In contrast to the *chos gzhis*, they formed coherent geographical units encompassing the villages in the upper, middle and lower parts of Spiti and the Pin valley, and were named accordingly ('Todpá', 'Barjik', 'Shám', 'Pinu' or 'Pín', cf. *ibid.*: 449–50, Lyall 1874: 181). According to a list dating from the late 1840s, the total number of villages, hamlets and major individual estates (held mostly by noble families, *no no*) was 67: 24 in Pin valley, 5 in upper, 10 in middle and 11.5 in lower Spiti and 16.5 in the *chos gzhis* unit—'Lidang' village being divided up between these two administrative units (Hay 1851: 449–50).

In order to understand the socio-economic organisation fundamental to these administrative units (including the *chos gzhis*), it is not only necessary to identify the producers and recipients of the different categories of dues, their amount and proportion but also to examine the flow of dues within and beyond these administrative units. With regard to the monasteries belonging to particular orders, it is therefore necessary to identify not only their relationship with a certain district but also the amount of certain categories of dues they received from households belonging to other districts, and vice versa.

What were the basic elements of the system of taxation prevailing in these districts forced upon the producers of the various dues, the *khral pa* households? First of all it was based on a system of dues in kind. These dues in kind—mainly barley—were further differentiated terminologically according to the authority to which they were to be delivered. *Nas khral* or 'barley tax' was due only in the four 'secular' units. Until 1839, this tax was handed over to the local officials and representatives of the king of Ladakh, then, until 1846, to the representatives of his overlords, the Sikhs, and then, increasingly in money form, to the

23 In the early 19th century, the common designation in Kulu proper for districts whose revenue was due to the king was 'khálsa kothís', therefore synonymous with 'royal kothís' (Lyall 1874: 118, 170).

24 According to a later source, the corresponding Tibetan word in use for these districts before 1846 was 'ngábchu' (*Gazetteer of the Kangra District* 1918: 260), i.e. *lnga bcu*, unit of fifty (households). The total number of houses recorded in 1849/50 was 316 (Hay 1851: 437). If one subtracts the houses not belonging to the *khral pa* class, the number must have been quite close to 250 'paying houses' mentioned by J. Cunningham (1844: 211) although certainly not based on a census. This number was also given by an old informant in Tabo village in September 1997 with regard to earlier periods.

British authorities. The other category of dues in kind which was particularly characteristic for the *khral pa* households of the *chos gzhis* and was assigned to the monasteries is referred to in British sources as 'pun', 'pún' and 'bón' (Lyall 1874: 182). In local Tibetan sources, e.g. in a paper inscription in the Tabo Assembly Hall datable to 1838 (cf. De Rossi Filibeck 1999: 201–202) as well as in the two register books from Tabo dating to the second half of the 20th century (see below), this word is consistently written *bon*. Most probably influenced by the way this word was rendered in these British sources, Carrasco seems to have been convinced that 'pún' corresponds to the Tibetan *bun* (or *bu lon*), i.e. money, debt, interest, rent, etc. (Carrasco 1959: 176–77). De Rossi Filibeck, too, followed this view although without satisfying explanation: "I think that *bon* may be translated as grain even if the two terms *pun* and *bun* may be referred to the Tibetan word *bun* (and not *bon*) which means bond [...]" (De Rossi Filibeck 1999: 202, n. 63). Taking into account the phrase *khal stong nyag ma bcu sa bon* [*sic*!] *'gro ba'i zhing* appearing in *Mnga' ris rgyal rabs* (56.5)—cited above in Vitali's translation—and considering the historical (western Tibetan) context related with this word, I would rather favour a different explanation holding that *bon* or *sa bon* is the correct spelling and designates a special category of religious dues in kind, i.e. grain (usually barley), carrying a religious connotation, as opposed to *khral*, i.e. dues in kind levied by secular authorities.

Another element of this system in both types of districts were obligatory labour services as porters including the provision of animals (especially horses) and supplies used for the transport of travellers and their luggage, goods, etc. Usually called *'u lag* in Tibetan, according to an old informant from Tabo, this was also the local designation in Spiti. In adjacent areas of western Tibet, the expression *ha la* seems to have been used as a synonym for *'u lag* (*Stod mnga' ris skor gsum gyi lo rgyus* 1996: 116). British sources use the word 'begar' which was also common in the kingdom of Bashahr including Upper Kinnaur and in other areas of northwestern India.

Both taxes were related only with the *khral pa* type of peasant households who held their land from the supreme owner, i.e. in the case of the 'royal districts' between ca. 1630 and 1839 (except 1734–58) the kings of Ladakh or the central Tibetan government and before the kings of Gu ge. In the case of the *khral pa* belonging to the *chos gzhis*, their dues seem to have been assigned to monasteries (in later periods affil-

iated with the Dge lugs pa) by the rulers of Gu ge long time before Spiti had become a part of Ladakh.

Monastery	Number of monks (1871)	Administrative unit	1871		1891	
			khal	*bre*	Paid acc. to Revenue records (*khal*)	Actually paid (*khal*)
Dankhar	90	Sham	137	14		
		chos gzhis	120			
		Stod	73	17		
		Total	331	11	367	474
Tabo	32	Sham	53	5		
		chos gzhis	134	19		
		stod	10	10		
		Total	198	14	199	244
Kyi	100	*chos gzhis*	379	4		
		Bar	14			
		Stod	60			
		Total	453	4	446	981
Tangyut	60	*chos gzhis*	222			
		Bar	87	16		
		Stod	9	12		
		Pin	20			
		Total			374	729
Pin	100	Pin	81	10	242	231

Table 1: Amount of *bon* collectable from the five administrative units by individual monasteries (1871, 1891) (after Lyall 1874: 210, Diack 1892: 14, Coldstream 1913, Part V: 8)

From the information contained in Table 1, it becomes clear that the *bon* dues levied from the households belonging to the *chos gzhis* were not only appropriated by the three Dge lugs pa monasteries of Tabo, Kyi (Dkyil) and Dankhar (Brang mkhar) but also, to a considerable degree, by the Sa skya pa monastery of Tangyut (Steng rgyud) near Kaza. Among the three Dge lugs pa monasteries, Kyi received the major portion, followed by Tabo with a smaller number of monks. On the other hand, the *bon* collectable by Dankhar monastery from the ‘royal division’ of lower Spiti was higher than that from the *chos gzhis*. Finally,

Kungri (Gung ring) monastery in Pin which belongs to the Rnying ma pa order did not receive *bon* from outside the Pin administrative unit.

The figures in Table 1 also indicate that the amount of *bon* collectable by the monasteries according to the settlement of 1871 differs considerably from the amount which was recorded (on the basis of this settlement) in 1891, and even more so from the amount that was actually paid (and found out later during the next settlement).[25] These differences were basically founded in the co-existence of two systems of taxation, the one which the local population—lay households as well as monasteries—continued to practise was based on religious belief and customary law, the other which was superimposed by the British who while adhering to the existing administrative units and structures ignored their functional purposes.

The British settlement officers who were in charge of Spiti since 1846 only seldom visited the area and did not care much about the differences between these administrative units. “All that is required is some acknowledgments of our supremacy, [...]. All that I endeavoured to obtain was some approximation, for statistical record, of the probable amount of land under cultivation” (Barnes 1855: 208–209). What happened was that from the late 1840s onwards, landholders of all administrative units were forced to pay their taxes to the British and not in kind but in cash. This meant double taxation for the households from whom the *bon* dues were collected, especially those of the *chos gzhis* who by customary law were bound to continue to pay their dues in kind to the monasteries. As a result, they never told the British settlement officers the real size of their fields who for decades did not really care about being deceived.

Finally, in 1912, on the occasion of the last settlement completed under the British, matters were clarified by the settlement officer Coldstream:

[25] For that reason, a careful and cautious use of these figures is necessary which presupposes a careful reconstruction of the whole process and context leading to the calculation of these figures. This is even more necessary dealing with the figures and other information appearing in the *Gazetteers* of the area which are based on the settlement reports although mostly without providing references as to their background. Especially Carrasco’s study of the systems of land tenure and political organisation in Tibet suffered from this uncritical use of the information compiled and cited in these *Gazetteers* with regard to Spiti treated by him as providing “also the key to an understanding of much less complete data from other parts of Tibet” (Carrasco 1959: 232). Cf. Jahoda 2003: 82–84 and 152–54 for a preliminary re-evaluation of his respective statements and hypotheses.

> All possible precautions were taken to verify the payments of *pun* [*bon*] [...] After some difficulty the monastery records were procured and examined. These were always in a very confused state, being only a mass of tattered manuscripts packed without any order into leather boxes. [....] At Dangkhar a darbar was held at which the abbots of all the monasteries, the *Nono* [i.e. the head of the leading local aristocratic family] and his servants, the patwari and the great majority of the landowners were present. [....] Asked why the truth had been concealed so long, the assembly gave the explanation [...] that they feared confiscation of religious dues by Government. 'But now that the measuring chain has come to Spiti, nothing can possibly be hidden, and each *khang-chhen* [*khang chen*] has been ordered to say what is true.' This declaration was corroborated by a high dignitary of the Lhassa faith [i.e. the Dge lugs pa school, most probably the contemporary incarnation of *lo chen* Rin chen bzang po] who was living in the rich monastery of Ki. The people admitted that whatever cash revenue was imposed they would be bound by their religion to continue paying *pun* at the existing rates to the monasteries. (Coldstream 1913, Part V: 8–9; my additions).

This is also what obviously happened during the following decades. It is also in accordance with the two register books kept in Tabo, which are the only Tibetan language records of this kind found to date in this region.

Regarding the local system of economic relationships between monks, monastic communities and lay people during the period from the mid-19th to mid-20th century, it is necessary to differentiate four different relationships, each related with a different social, economic, administrative or geographic sphere: the relationship between (a) monk—native family; (b) monastery—tenants; (c) monastic community—*chos gzhis*; (d) monk / monastic community / monastery—donors.

(a) The individual monks were maintained primarily by their native families who used to receive the produce of a field set aside for them. (For that reason, it seems to have been difficult if not impossible for households with little or no landed property to send children to the monastery.)

In addition to the produce of the so-called 'monk's field' (*grwa zhing*),[26] the income of the monks was based on their share, according

[26] The 'monk's field' was a plot of ca. one to one and a half *khal* found in most holdings in Spiti valley. It was ploughed and sown by the head of the family, usually the monk's brother or uncle, but the monk provided the seed and got the whole produce. This *grwa zhing* reverted to the head of the family on the death of the monk (cf. Lyall 1874: 186).

to the rank in the monastery, of the funeral offerings ('bula' / *'bul ba*) and of the harvest alms; finally, anything they could acquire in the way of wages for work done in the summer, referred to as 'wizardry' in the British sources (Coldstream 1913, Part V: 4).

(b) One major source of income of the monasteries were the fields owned by them and cultivated by tenants, *khral pa* / *khang chen* as well as *khang chung* households (cf. n. 9): "Certain fields are the full property of the monasteries; they pay no revenue, and are generally either near the monastery to which they belong, or in adjacent villages" (Lyall 1874: 186–87).

(c) Besides these fields, the other main source of income of the monasteries, in fact the corporate monastic community of individual monasteries, were the dues in kind called *bon* levied from lay *khral pa* households mainly belonging to the *chos gzhis* but also the 'secular' administrative units. Income from these two sources were used to finance religious activities (rituals, etc.) involving the monastic community as a whole.

The dues in kind collected by the monastery were spent "on the occasion of certain festivals, which sometimes last several days, during which special services are performed in the chapels; while these festivals last, the monks mess together, eating and drinking their full of meat, barley, meat, butter and tea. The main source from which the expense of these feasts is met is the 'pun,' which is not divided among the monks for every-day consumption in the separate cells" (Lyall 1874: 212). This observation was confirmed by Coldstream in 1912 who added a new piece of information: "The *pun* collections are spent principally on religious feasts and concerts in which the lay population joins" (Coldstream 1913, Part V: 4). This information is also confirmed by the two register books in Tabo monastery where a number of these festivals are mentioned.

(d) Individual monks, monastic communities and monasteries were provided with additional income through (sometimes considerable) donations from lay people (cf. De Rossi Filibeck 1999).

TABO MONASTERY REGISTER BOOKS

I first learned of the existence of the two register books in the monastery in 1998, but could not consult them. In 2000, I was able to pho-

tograph and study them *in situ*.[27] Both register books contain lists of households and the dues in kind (*bon*) the *khang chen* households had to deliver to the monastery on certain festive occasions. The older book is not completely preserved, and its title is lost (Plates 1 and 2). The names of villages, households and fields[28] mentioned indicate that the dues in kind—usually varieties of barley (*snyi'u, so*)—came mainly from Tabo and other villages in lower Spiti valley (including a few villages belonging to Upper Kinnaur). The text can be dated to the middle of the 20th century on the basis of an earth-ox year (*sa glang*), i.e. 1949, together with further evidence mentioned in the text.

The second book is entitled *Dus mchod kyi yig tho*, 'Festival register book' (Plates 3 and 4), and *Lta po mgon* (sic: *dgon*) *gyi bon tho bskod pa*, 'Tabo monastery dues register book' (Plate 5). This volume comprises 36 pages and contains entries dated in the final pages of the text to the years 1966, 1968 and 1971. The dues in kind[29] are again mostly referred to as *bon*[30] (cf. Plate 6). They were related with major religious festivals celebrated in Tabo, e.g. 'Dgu stor' (*Dgu gtor*) (cf. Plate 7), Smon lam and Dus mchod. The dues were collected from households as far as upper Spiti valley.[31] Names of villages,[32] fields,[33] households[34]

[27] The complete documentation is archived in the Western Himalaya Archive Vienna (WHAV), an interdisciplinary research and documentation centre presently housed at the Institute of Art History, University of Vienna, focussing on the Western Himalaya, Tibet, Inner and South Asia.

[28] Field names identifiable with Tabo are e.g. 'Khar gog', 'Bor bor sa', 'Mgon sa', 'Mar me', 'Shin khri', etc. Other villages mentioned are Poh which appears as 'Spod' and 'Dpog' in Tibetan spelling, Upper and Lower Mane villages ('Ma ṇi gong ma', 'Ma ṇi 'og ma'), Gyu ('Sgyu'), Maling ('Ma ling mgon sa') and 'No sbyong' (a hamlet between Sumra und Sumdo) in Upper Kinnaur.

[29] In addition to barley wheat (*gro*) is also mentioned.

[30] In a few cases, also the expression *khang bon* is found, but its meaning remains uncertain.

[31] E.g. 'Bskyo mo' is identifiable as modern Kyomo or Kiamo (Sanan 1997: Table B-11). This village belonged to the *chos gzhis* according to Hay's list where it is referred to as 'Kaömá' (cf. Hay 1851: 450). Another village in middle Spiti which also belonged to the *chos gzhis* is 'Khu rig' (cf. *ibid*.: 450), modern Khurik, perhaps also 'Ma gnas' (Hay's 'Munni').

[32] Tabo village appears in a variety of spellings in Tibetan—'Rta po' (8), 'Lta po' (4), 'Lta bo' and Ta po (1). Among other villages mentioned are Sumra ('Gsum rags'), a village in lower Spiti valley already belonging to Upper Kinnaur and 'Spo' (Poh).

[33] This includes also references to the threshing grounds ('*dbul ltag*') and names of other village areas (e.g. Spes 'or).

[34] Among these names, '*byo ba*', a local designation for a kind of astrologer, which appears six times is of particular interest. The correct Tibetan spelling is most probably *jo ba* (cf. Dge rgan 1976: 325.9). Another interesting fact is that in a number of cases

(Plate 8) and local terminology[35] represent a rich source for future studies of particular aspects of the social, economic and religious order in Tabo.

Bibliography

Bareau, A. 1961. Indian and ancient Chinese Buddhism: institutions analogous to the jisa. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* III(June), 443–51.

Barnes, G.C. 1855. *Report on the Settlement in the District of Kangra in the trans-Sutlej Sta[t]es*. Lahore.

Bhatnagar, R.S., Sharma, K.K. and Sharma, D.K. 1980. *An Economic Profile of Spiti Cold Desert Area: a bench mark survey*. Shimla.

Carrasco, P. 1959. *Land and Polity in Tibet*. American Ethnological Society, Monograph 32. Seattle-London (repr. 1972).

Clarke, G.E. 1980. The temple and kinship among a buddhist people of the Himalaya. PhD dissertation, University of Oxford, Oxford.

Cunningham, A. 1854. *Ladák, Physical, Statistical, and Historical; with Notices of the Surrounding Countries*. London (repr. Srinagar, Kashmir 1997).

Cunningham, J.D. 1844. Notes on Moorcroft's Travels in Ladakh, and on Gerard's Account of Kunáwar, including a general description of the latter district. *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* XIII(part I), 172–53.

Coldstream, J. 1913. *Final Report of the Third Revised Settlement, 1910–1913, of the Parol, Lag Maharaja and Lag Sari–Sub-Tahsil Saraj–Rupi–Lahul and Spiti Waziris.* Lahore.

de Rossi Filibeck, E. 1999. Later inscriptions in the Tabo gTsug lag khaṅ. *In* L. Petech and C. Luczanits (eds) *Inscriptions from the Tabo Main Temple, Texts and Translations*. Serie Orientale Roma LXXXIII. Rome, 189–206.

—— 2002. A description of Spyi ti by J. Gergan. *In* K. Buffetrille and H. Diemberger (eds) *Territory and Identity in Tibet and the Himalayas*. Proceedings of the ninth seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Leiden 2000, volume 9. Leiden, 313–24.

Dge rgan, Y. (Bsod nams tshe brtan) 1976. Bsod nams skyabs ldan dge rgan (ed.) *Bla dwags rgyal rabs 'chi med gter*. Srinagar-Kashmir.

Diack, A.H. 1892. *Assessment Report of the Waziri Spiti Portion of the Kulu Tahsil in the Kangra District*. Lahore.

Francke, A.H. 1914. *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, part I: *Personal narrative. A.S.I., New Imperial Series*, Vol. XXXVIII. Calcutta (repr. New Delhi 1992).

Gazetteer of the Kangra District 1918. Volume XXX A, parts II—Kulu and Saraj, III—Lahul, IV—Spiti, 1917. Lahore.

Gazetteer of the Simla Hill States 1910. Punjab States Gazetteer, Volume VIII, (repr. New Delhi 1995).

---

the heads of the households from whom the dues are levied are women, clearly identifiable through their names. This is still in accord with the present situation among *khang chen* households some of which are headed by women.

[35] This can be noticed especially in the case of weighing instruments and now obsolete measure units (e.g. *ma re, po re*; cf. Jahoda 2003: 371–72, n. 630).

Gernet, J. 1956. *Les aspects économiques du Bouddhisme dans la société chinoise du Ve au Xe siècle*. Saigon.

Gdung rabs. 1976. *In* Bsod nams skyabs ldan dge rgan (ed.) (Bsod nams tshe brtan) Yo seb dge rgan *Bla dwags rgyal rabs 'chi med gter*. Srinagar-Kashmir, 180.15–183.5.

Goldstein, M.C. 1968. An Anthropological Study of the Tibetan Political System. PhD dissertation, University of Washington (repr. Ann Arbor 1991).

—— 1971a. Taxation and the structure of a Tibetan village. *Central Asiatic Journal*, XV(1), 1–27.

—— 1971b. Stratification, polyandry and family structure in central Tibet. *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* XXVII(1), 64–74.

—— 1971c. Serfdom and mobility: an examination of the institution of 'human lease' in traditional Tibetan society. *The Journal of Asian Studies* XXX(3), 521–34.

Grimshaw, A. 1983. Rizong: A Monastic Community in Ladakh. PhD dissertation, University of Cambridge, Cambridge.

Guleria, A.S. 1987. Management of cold arid desert development programme in Himachal Pradesh. *In* Y.P.S. Pangtey and S.C. Joshi (eds) *Western Himalaya*. Vol. II: *Problems and Development*. Nainital, U.P., 718–24.

Harcourt, A.F.P. 1972. *The Himalayan Districts of Kooloo, Lahoul and Spiti*. Delhi (first published London 1871).

Hay, W.C. 1851. Report on the valley of Spiti; and facts collected with a view to a future revenue settlement. *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* XIX, 429–51.

Hein, V. 2001. The role of the speaker in the verbal system of the Tibetan dialect of Tabo/Spiti. *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area* 24(1), 35–48.

Jahoda, C. 2003. Sozio-ökonomische Organisation in einem Grenzgebiet tibetischer Kultur: Tabo-Spiti Tal (Himachal Pradesh, Indien)—Geschichte und Gegenwart. Ein Beitrag zum Konzept der 'peasant societies'. PhD dissertation, University of Vienna, Vienna.

—— In print. Bemerkungen zur Tradition und Funktion einer weiblichen Schutzgottheit in Tabo, Spiti Tal, H.P., Indien. *In* A. Gingrich and G. Hazod (eds) *Der Rand und die Mitte. Sozialanthropologische und kulturgeschichtliche Beiträge zu Tibet und den tibetischsprachigen Himalaya-Regionen*. Vienna

Klimburg-Salter, D.E. 1997. *Tabo, a Lamp for the Kingdom: Early Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Art in the Western Himalaya*. Milan.

Klimburg-Salter, D.E., Tropper, K. and Jahoda, C. (eds) Forthcoming. *Word, picture and song: a transdisciplinary dialogue*. Proceedings of the tenth seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Oxford 2003.

La dwags rgyal rabs. 1926. In A.H. Francke *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, part (volume) II: *The chronicles of Ladakh and minor chronicles, texts and translations, with notes and maps*, Calcutta (repr. New Delhi 1992), 19–59.

Lamb, A. 1956. The Spiti valley today. *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society* 43(July–Oct.), 248–54.

Luczanits, C. 1999. Minor inscriptions and captions in the Tabo gtsug lag khaṅ. *In* L. Petech and C. Luczanits (eds) *Inscriptions from the Tabo main temple. Texts and Translations*. Serie Orientale Roma LXXXIII. Rome, 95–187.

Lyall, J.B. 1874. *Report of the land revenue settlement of the Kangra district, Panjab,* 1865–1872. Lahore.

Meisezahl, R.O. (ed.) 1985. *Die große Geschichte des tibetischen Buddhismus nach alter Tradition rÑiṅ ma'i chos 'byuṅ chen mo*. Faksimile-Edition der Berliner Handschrift (Staatsbibliothek, Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Hs. or. 1640) des Geschichtsbuches Chos 'byuṅ me tog sñiṅ po'i sbraṅ rci'i bcud, auch mṄa' bdag Ñaṅ

gi Chos 'byuṅ genannt, verfaßt von Ñaṅ Ral pa can (1136–1204 A.D.) Monumenta Tibetica Historica, Abteilung I: Scriptores, Band 3. Sankt Augustin.

Miller, R.J. 1961. Buddhist monastic economy: the jisa mechanism. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* III(June), 427–38.

Mnga' ris rgyal rabs. 1996. *In* R. Vitali *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang: According to mNga'.ris rgyal.rabs by Gu.ge mkhan.chen Ngag.dbang grags.pa*. Dharamsala, 3–85.

Petech, L. 1947. The Tibetan-Ladakhi-Moghul war (1681–1683). *Indian Historical Quarterly* XXIII, 169–99. (Updated reprint 1988 as: The Tibetan-Ladakhi-Moghul war (1679–1683). *In* L. Petech *Selected papers on Asian history*. Serie Orientale Roma LX. Rome, 19–44).

—— 1977. *The Kingdom of Ladakh* c. 950–1842 A.D. Serie Orientale Roma LI. Rome.

—— 1997. Western Tibet: historical introduction. *In* D.E. Klimburg-Salter *Tabo, a Lamp for the Kingdom: Early Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Art in the Western Himalaya*. Milan, 229–55.

Petech, L. and Luczanits, C. (eds) 1999. *Inscriptions from the Tabo Main Temple, Texts and Translation*. Serie Orientale Roma LXXXIII. Rome.

Rgya bod yig tshang. 1985. *In* Dung dkar Blo bzang 'phrin las (ed.) *Rgya bod yig tshang chen mo.* Chengdu.

Rizvi, B.R. 1987. Class formation and conflict in a polyandrous village of Himachal Pradesh. *In* M.K. Raha (ed.) *The Himalayan Heritage*. New Delhi, 413–26.

Rose, H.A. 1911–1919. *A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and North-West Frontier Province*, 3 vols. Lahore (repr. New Delhi 1991, 2 vols.).

Sanan, D. 1997. Painting a Desert Landscape (The impact of a development project: the Desert Development Program in Spiti). Unpublished report.

Sarkar, R. 1996. Bodh. *In* B.R. Sharma and A.R. Sankhyan (eds) *Himachal Pradesh*. People of India, Volume XXIV. New Delhi, 112–20.

Scherrer-Schaub, C.A. In print. Découverte de documents sur l'histoire des monastères du sPiti, conservés au Musée de Lahore, Pakistan. *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient*.

Scherrer-Schaub, C.A. and Steinkellner, E. (eds) 1999. *Tabo Studies II: Manuscripts, Texts, Inscriptions, and the Arts*. Serie Orientale Roma LXXXVII. Rome.

Schwieger, P. 1999. *Teilung und Reintegration des Königreichs von Ladakh im 18. Jahrhundert. Der Staatsvertrag zwischen Ladakh und Purig aus dem Jahr 1753*. Monumenta Tibetica Historica, Abteilung III, Band 7. Bonn.

Sharma, L.R., Bhati, J.P. and Thakur, D.S. 1990–91. *Evaluation of the Integrated Tribal Development Project Kinnaur (Himachal Pradesh)* (final report). Shimla.

Singh, J. 1989. *Banks, Gods and Government: Institutional and Informal Credit Structure in a Remote and Tribal Indian District (Kinnaur, Himachal Pradesh)* 1960–1985. Beiträge zur Südasienforschung 129. Wiesbaden.

Steinkellner, E. 2000. Manuscript fragments, texts, and inscriptions in the temple of Tabo. An interim report with bibliography. *In* J.A. Silk (ed.) *Wisdom, Compassion, and the Search for Understanding. The Buddhist Studies Legacy of Gadjin M. Nagao*. Honolulu, 315–31.

Steinkellner, E. and Luczanits, C. 1997. A new translation of the renovation inscription in the Tabo main temple (*gtsug-lag-khang*). *In* D.E. Klimburg-Salter *Tabo, a Lamp for the Kingdom: Early Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Art in the Western Himalaya*. Milan, 257–59.

Stod mnga' ris skor gsum gyi lo rgyus 'bel gtam rin chen gter gyi phreng ba. 1996. Lhasa.

[Trebeck, G.] 1841. Mr. Trebeck's excursion to Piti. *In* H.H. Wilson (ed.) Moorcroft, W. and Trebeck, G. (1841) *Travels in the Himalayan provinces of Hindustan and the Panjab; in Ladakh and Kashmir, in Peshawar, Kabul, Kunduz, and Bokhara* (from 1819–1825), Vol. II, London (repr. Karachi 1979), 45–81.

Tsarong, P. 1987. Economy and Ideology on a Tibetan Monastic Estate in Ladakh: Processes of Production, Reproduction and Transformation. PhD dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison (repr. Ann Arbor 1990).

Vaidya, C.S. 1998. Socio-economic profile of Kibber: a tribal village of Spiti. *In* S.K. Gupta, V.P. Sharma and N.K. Sharda (eds) *Tribal Development: Appraisal & Alternatives*. New Delhi, 215–30.

Vitali, R. 1996. *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang: According to mNga'.ris rgyal.rabs by Gu.ge mkhan.chen Ngag.dbang grags.pa*. Dharamsala.

—— 1999 *Records of Tho.ling. A Literary and Visual Reconstruction of the "Mother" Monastery in Gu.ge*, Dharamshala.

—— 2000. A short guide to Key Gonpa. *In* Tashi Tsering (ed.) *Spyi ti dkyil dgon nor bu dge 'phel gyi byung ba brjod pa'i rab byed 'phags nor bdun ldan. A short guide to Key Gonpa*. Key, Himachal Pradesh, India, 77–94.

Wangdu, P. and Diemberger, H. 2000. *dBa' bzhed. The Royal Narrative Concerning the Bringing of the Buddha's Doctrine to Tibet.* Vienna.

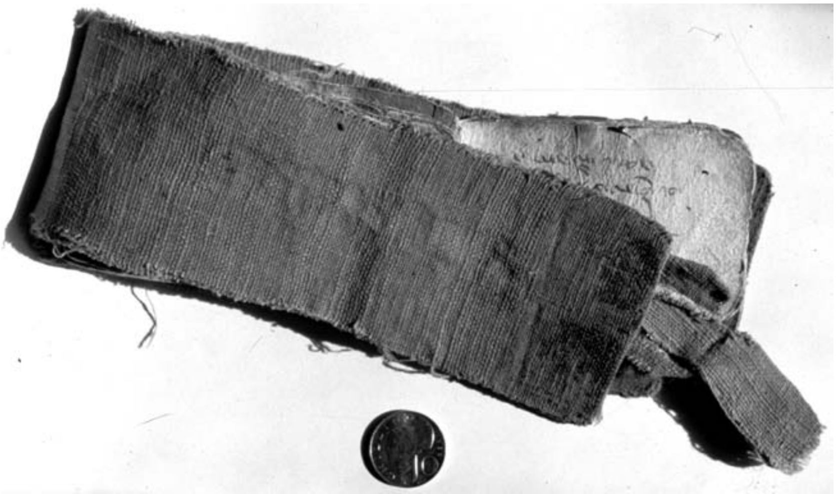


Plate 1: Register book, Tabo, mid-20th century (photograph C. Jahoda, WHAV CJ00 18,18)

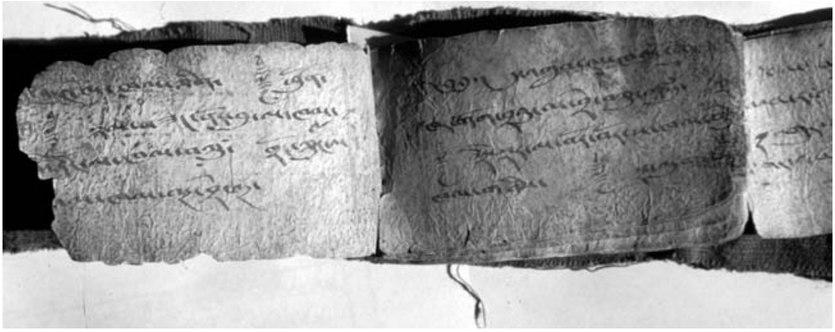


Plate 2: Register book, fragmentary page with lists of households and dues in kind (*bon*), Tabo (photograph C. Jahoda, WHAV CJ00 18,21)

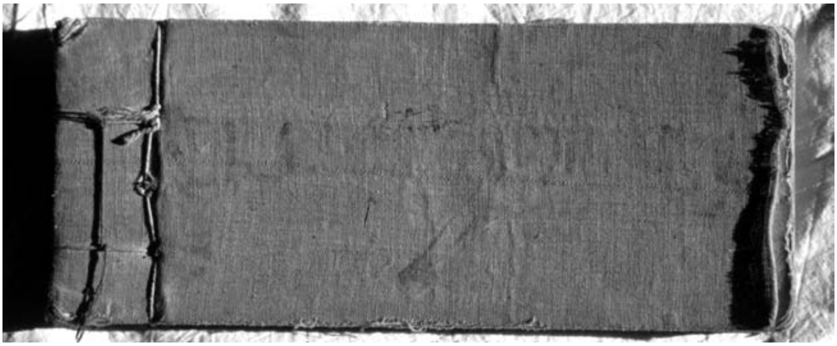


Plate 3: Register book, Tabo, third quarter 20th century (photograph C. Jahoda, WHAV CJ00 24,6)



Plate 4: Register book, Tabo, third quarter 20th century, first title page (inner cover) *Dus mchod kyi yig tho* (photograph C. Jahoda, WHAV CJ00 24,7)

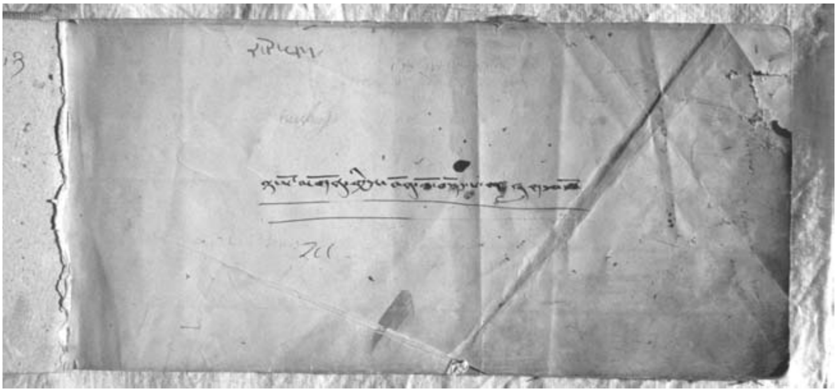


Plate 5: Register book, Tabo, third quarter 20th century, second title page *Lta po mgon* [sic: dgon] *gyi bon tho bskod pa bzhugs so* (photograph C. Jahoda, WHAV CJ00 24,8)

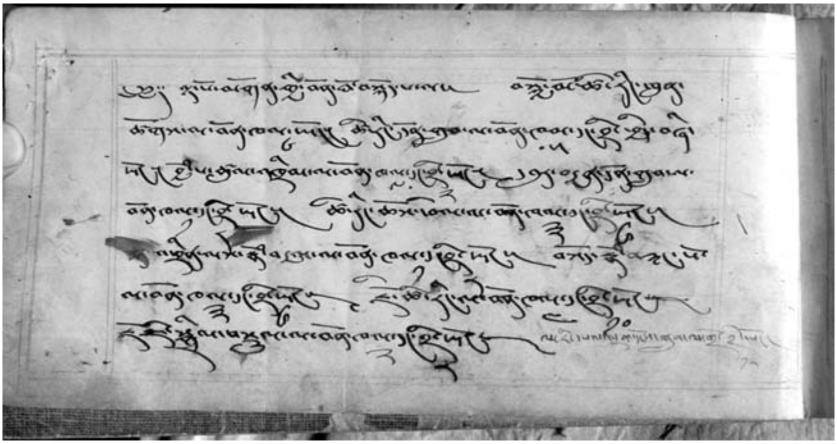


Plate 6: Register book, Tabo, third quarter 20th century, page 4b (photograph C. Jahoda, WHAV CJ00 24,10)

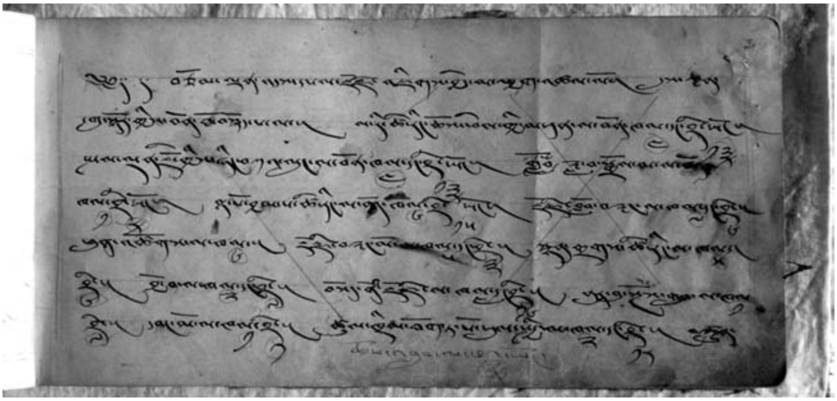


Plate 7: Register book, Tabo, third quarter 20th century, page 5a (photograph C. Jahoda, WHAV CJ00 24,11)

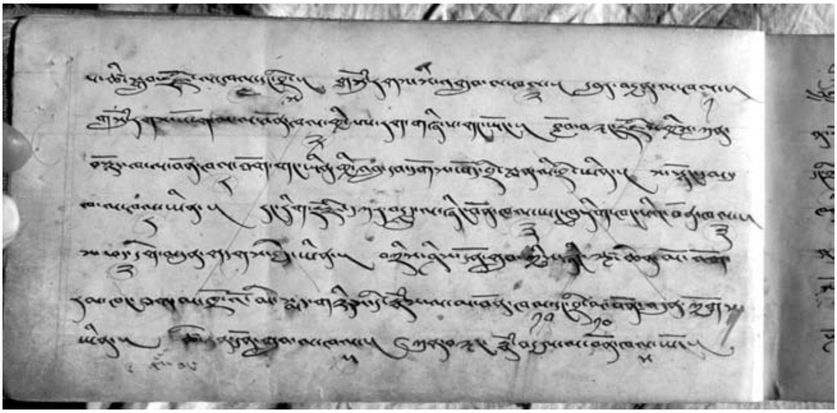
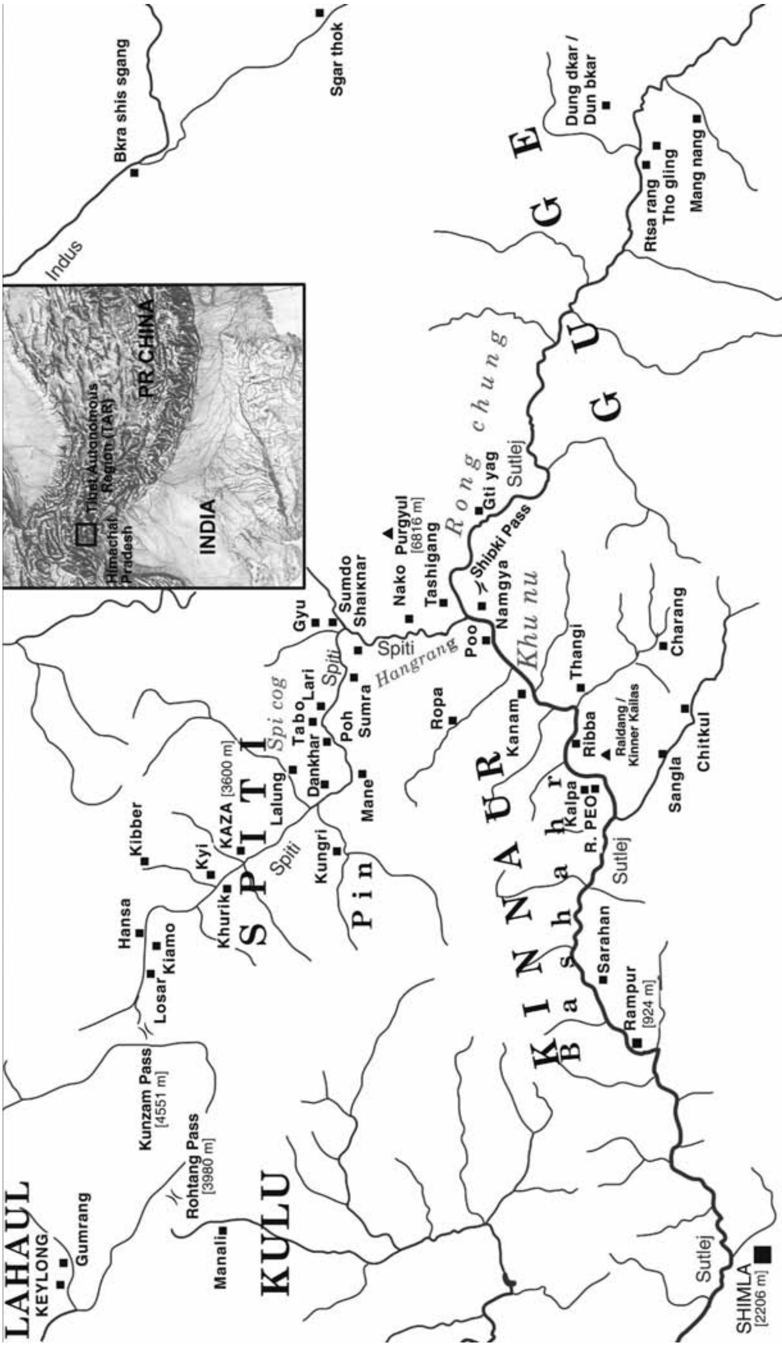


Plate 8: Register book, Tabo, third quarter 20th century, page 5b (photograph C. Jahoda, WHAV CJ00 24,12)



Map: Spiti and Sutlej valleys, western Tibet (drawing C. Jahoda based on Klimburg-Salter 1997: 22, 33)

Brill's Tibetan Studies Library

ISSN 1568-6183

1. Martin, D. *Unearthing Bon Treasures*. Life and Contested Legacy of a Tibetan Scripture Revealer, with a General Bibliography of Bon. 2001. ISBN 90 04 12123 4

2/1 Blezer, H. (ed.). *Tibet, Past and Present*. Tibetan Studies I. 2002. ISBN 90 04 12775 5

2/2 Blezer, H. (ed.). *Religion and Secular Culture in Tibet*. Tibetan Studies II. 2002. ISBN 90 04 12776 3

2/3 Ardussi, J., & H. Blezer (eds.). *Impressions of Bhutan and Tibetan Art*. Tibetan Studies III. 2002. ISBN 90 04 12545 0

2/4 Epstein, L. (ed.). *Khams pa Histories*. Visions of People, Place and Authority. 2002. ISBN 90 04 12423 3

2/5 Huber, T. (ed.). *Amdo Tibetans in Transition*. Society and Culture in the Post-Mao Era. 2002. ISBN 90 04 12596 5

2/6 Beckwith, C.I. (ed.). *Medieval Tibeto-Burman Languages*. 2002. ISBN 90 04 12424 1

2/7 Klimburg-Salter, D. & E. Allinger (eds.). *Buddhist Art and Tibetan Patronage Ninth to Fourteenth Centuries*. 2002. ISBN 90 04 12600 7

2/8 Klieger, P.C. (ed.). *Tibet, Self, and the Tibetan Diaspora*. Voices of Difference. 2002. ISBN 90 04 12555 8

2/9 Buffetrille, K. & H. Diemberger (eds.). *Territory and Identity in Tibet and the Himalayas*. 2002. ISBN 90 04 125973

2/10 Eimer, H. & D. Germano. (eds.). *The Many Canons of Tibetan Buddhism*. 2002. ISBN 90 04 12595 7

3. Pommaret, F. (ed.). *Lhasa in the Seventeenth Century*. The Capital of the Dalai Lamas. 2003. ISBN 90 04 12866 2

4. Andreyev, A. *Soviet Russia and Tibet*. The Debacle of Secret Diplomacy, 1918-1930s. 2003. ISBN 90 04 12952 9

5/1 Joseph, U.V. *Rabha*. 2007. ISBN-10: 90 04 13321 6, ISBN-13: 978 90 04 13321 1

5/2 Opgenort, J.R. *A Grammar of Wambule*. Grammar, Lexicon, Texts and Cultural Survey of a Kiranti Tribe of Eastern Nepal. 2004. ISBN 90 04 13831 5

5/3 Opgenort, J.R. *A Grammar of Jero*. With a Historical Comparative Study of the Kiranti Languages. 2005. ISBN 90 04 14505 2

5/4 Tolsma, G.J. *A Grammar of Kulung*. 2006. ISBN-10: 90 04 15330 6, ISBN-13: 978 90 04 15330 1

5/5 Plaisier, H. *A Grammar of Lepcha*. 2006. ISBN-10: 90 04 15525 2, ISBN-13: 978 90 04 15525 1
6. Achard, J.-L. *Bon Po Hidden Treasures*. A Catalogue of gTer ston bDe chen gling pa's *Collected Revelations*. 2004. ISBN 90 04 13835 8
7. Sujata, V. *Tibetan Songs of Realization*. Echoes from a Seventeenth-Century Scholar and Siddha in Amdo. 2005. ISBN 90 04 14095 6
8. Bellezza, J.V. *Spirit-mediums, Sacred Mountains and Related Bon Textual Traditions in Upper Tibet*. Calling Down the Gods. 2005. ISBN 90 04 14388 2
9. Bray, J. (ed.). *Ladakhi Histories*. Local and Regional Perspectives. 2005. ISBN 90 04 14551 6
10/1 Beckwith, C.I. (ed.). *Medieval Tibeto-Burman Languages II*. 2006. ISBN 90 04 15014 5
10/2 Klieger, P.C. (ed.). *Tibetan Borderlands*. 2006. ISBN-10: 90 04 15482 5, ISBN-13: 978 90 04 15482 7
10/3 Cuevas, B.J. & K.R. Schaeffer (eds.). *Power, Politics, and the Reinvention of Tradition*. Tibet in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries. 2006. ISBN-10: 90 04 15351 9, ISBN-13: 978 90 04 15351 6
10/4 Davidson, R.M. & C.K. Wedemeyer (eds.). *Tibetan Buddhist Literature and Praxis*. Studies in its Formative Period, 900–1400. 2006. ISBN-10: 90 04 15548 1, ISBN-13: 978 90 04 15548 0
10/5 Ardussi, J.A. & F. Pommaret (eds.). *Bhutan*. Traditions and Changes. 2007. ISBN-10: 90 04 15551 1, ISBN-13: 978 90 04 15551 0
10/6 Venturino, S.J. (ed.). *Contemporary Tibetan Literary Studies*. 2007. ISBN-10: 90 04 15516 3, ISBN-13: 978 90 04 15516 9
10/7 Klimburg-Salter, D., Tropper, K. & C. Jahoda (eds.). *Text, Image and Song in Transdisciplinary Dialogue*. 2007. ISBN-10: 90 04 15549 X, ISBN-13: 978 90 04 15549
10/8 Heller, A. & G. Orofino (eds.). *Discoveries in Western Tibet and the Western Himalayas*. Essays on History, Literature, Archaeology and Art. 2007. ISBN-10: 90 04 15520 1, ISBN-13: 978 90 04 15520 6
11. Karmay, S.G. *The Great Perfection (rdzogs chen)*. A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching of Tibetan Buddhism. Second edition. 2007. ISBN-10: 90 04 15142 7, ISBN-13: 978 90 04 15142 0
12. Dalton, J. & S. van Schaik. *Tibetan Tantric Manuscripts from Dunhuang*. A Descriptive Catalogue of the Stein Collection at the British Library. 2006. ISBN-10: 90 04 15422 1, ISBN-13: 978 90 04 15422 3
13. Pirie, F. *Peace and Conflict in Ladakh*. The Construction of a Fragile Web of Order. 2007. ISBN-10: 90 04 15596 1, ISBN-13: 978 90 04 15596 1